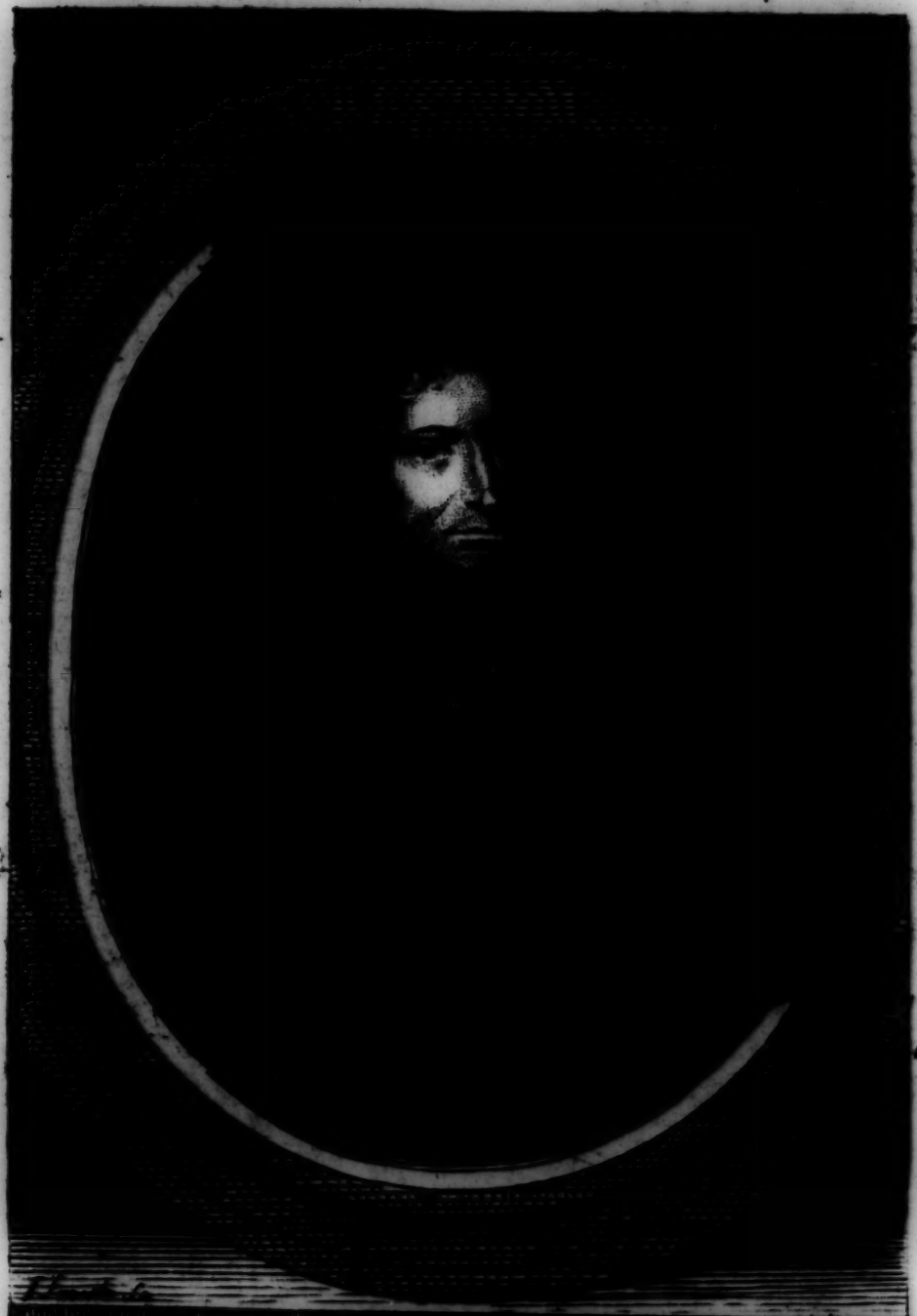

THE
Revd S. Smith. D.D.

THE HISTORY OF THE

LIVES, ACTIONS, TRAVELS, || SUFFERINGS AND DEATHS,

OF OUR

BLESSED SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST,

AND HIS

TWELVE APOSTLES.

VOL. I.

By S. SMITH, *D. D.*

LONDON.

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HISTORY

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THE *historical Part of the* New Teſtament, *ſays the learned Mr.* Howel, *is contained in the Goſpels, and deſervedly claims our greateſt Eſteem, as conveying to us the bleſſed Tidings of our recovering that happy State which our firſt Parents forfeited in* Paradiſe. *All thoſe Excellencies which in general belong to the* Old Teſtament, *may, in a more peculiar Manner be claimed by the* New; *for as St.* Auguſtin *ſays,* l. 1. de Conſenſ. Evang. c. 1. What the Law and the Prophets only foretold, the Goſpel plainly demonſtrates to have been compleated. *If therefore the good and holy Men, under the Diſpenſation of the Law, which was a Shadow of what hath ſince come to paſs, were encouraged to undergo the ſevereſt Perſecutions, in hopes of a Re-*

ward to come, what greater Encouragement had the Saints under the Goſpel to ſuffer Extremity, when the Reward was gone before them? From hence the Church in all Ages has drawn vaſt Advantage; hence the Martyrs in the Midſt of their Agonies took Magnimity, looking up to the Author of their Reward. Thus the Protomartyr, St. Stephen, *in a Shower of Stones, was comforted with a Sight of the Son of God. Hence the holy Apoſtles, and the reſt of our Saviour's Followers, enforced the Doctrines of their Lord, not from their diſtant Relations of others, but from the more immediate Dictates of his Mouth, whence, by a ſacred and certain Tradition they have been handed to theſe Times. From hence, in the Times of Obſcurity and moſt ſubtil Hereſy, we are ſecure in the Eſtabliſhment of our Faith, and plentifully furniſhed with Arguments and Inſtructions againſt the moſt plauſible Errors. From our Saviour's more immediate Example, we learn Humility and Meekneſs, who, tho' the Son of God, condeſcended to the vile Condition of Humanity. From him we learn Patience in Adverſity, and Equanimity in the moſt elevated State of Life: And whatever Blemiſhes, by the Corruptions of Nature may ſtain our Profeſſion, his Word is our Rule and Guide to ſet us right again, and reſtore Religion to its primitive Purity. For this Reaſon our bleſſed Lord expreſly calls himſelf the Light of the World; of which his holy Goſpel is the happy Vehicle to convey it to Mankind, which, till his Incarnation ſat in Darkneſs. And hence the royal Prophet* Iſaiah, *foretelling the Coming of our Saviour, ſays,* The People that walked in Darkneſs have ſeen a great Light; they that dwelt in the Land of the Shadow of Death, upon them hath the Light ſhined, *Iſa.* ix. 2. *Which is literally compleated*

in the Deliverance of the World by Chriſt, *thro' the Preaching of the Goſpel.*

From the Precellence therefore of the Goſpel's conveying this Light to us, the Scriptures of the New Teſtament *have acquired ſuch Reverence and Veneration, that the Maſters of the World, in the earlieſt Ages of the Church, thought them worthy their higheſt Care and Eſteem.* Conſtantine the Great *had the Goſpels bound up in a Cover of Gold, ſet with moſt valuable Jewels.* Theodoſius *the Emperor tranſcribed the Goſpels with his own Hand, and ſpent good Part of every Night in reading them. The general Councils of* Nice, Epheſus, *and* Chalcedon, *placed the Book of the Goſpels in the midſt of their Aſſemblies: as* Nicephorus *tells us,* l. 4. c. 3. *that the holy Fathers might have Reſpect to them as to the Perſon of* Chriſt. *And St.* Cyril *of* Alexandria, *who lived in the Beginning of the fifth Century, tells us, it was by ſynodical Sanction ordained, that in all ſolemn Atteſtations they were to lay their Hand on the Book of the Goſpels, and invoke the Help of God in the holy Goſpel. Which Solemnity is continued to this Day, when any one is obliged to take an Oath, nor was this only obſerved among the Orthodox, but when through Neglect of Diſcipline, and the Depravity of Morals, Error crept into the Church, the Hereticks themſelves paid the ſame Reſpect to the Goſpels, who, though they expunged ſome Books out of the Canon of Scripture, mutilated and depraved others, never offered by any ſacrilegious Attempt to touch or violate the Goſpels;* [*not but that ſeveral whimſical Innovators have top'd upon the World ridiculous* Pſeudo-Goſpels:] *Nay, in ſo great an Eſteem were the Goſpels among the Heathens, that St.* Auguſtin *affirms* de Civitate Dei, l. 10. c. 29. *he had ſeen the*

Begin-

Beginning of St. John's *Goſpel among the Writings of the* Platoniſts. *So that the Theologiſts of all Ages have deſervedly, and with a general Conſent, ſtiled this Part of Holy Scripture moſt neceſſary and uſeful. And truly, if we have reſpect to the Subject-Matter, Author, and Method or Manner of them, we ſhall ſee thoſe Epithets juſtly appropriated to the Writings of the* New-Teſtament, *and particularly to the Goſpels.*

The ſame learned Author makes the following Remarks on the Hiſtory of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*: *This Hiſtory is not enlarged to the Travels and Acts of all the Apoſtles, but confined chiefly to the moſt remarkable Paſſages of two,* viz. *of St.* Peter *and St.* Paul; *and therefore doth not pretend to give a full Relation of the Plantation of* Chriſtianity *in all Parts, whither the reſt of the Apoſtles muſt be preſumed to have gone out, as to their reſpective Provinces; but only affords us an Eſſay of what was done in* Judea *and* Samaria, *among the* Jews *remaining there, and in other Cities of* Syria, Aſia, &c. *among the* Jews *in their Diſperſions. It likewiſe gives us a Taſte only of the revealing the Goſpel to the* Gentiles; *firſt, to ſome ſingle Families, as that of* Cornelius; *and, after the* Jews *had given Evidence of their obſtinate Reſolutions of oppoſing them, eſpecially for their preaching to the* Gentiles, *then to whole Cities and Countries; profeſſedly departing to the* Gentiles, *as thoſe among whom they were aſſured of better Succeſs than they had found among the* Jews.

As to the Story of St. Peter's *Actions or Travels, the Relations here given are very few; and they proceed no farther than to his Deliverance from* Herod's *impriſoning him, and the Death of that Perſecutor,*

which

which happened in the Year of Chriſt 44. *After which he is known to have lived four and twenty Years, and certainly was not an unprofitable Steward of that Talent with which God, in all that Time had intruſted him.*

St. Luke *undoubtedly wrote his Hiſtory of the Apoſtolic Acts at* Rome, *at the End of St.* Paul's *two Years Impriſonment there, with which he concluded his Story. He is more particular in his Account of St.* Paul, *than of any other of the Apoſtles he mentions; for, beſides St.* Paul's *extraordinary and ſignal Activity in the Cauſe of* Chriſt, *which mark'd him out for doing and ſuffering much, St.* Luke *was his conſtant Attendant, an Eye-witneſs of the whole Carriage of his Life, and privy to his moſt intimate Tranſactions, and therefore capable of giving a more full and ſatisfactory Relation of them; ſince no Evidence or Teſtimony in Matters of Fact can be more rational and convincing than his, who reports nothing but what he had ſeen and heard. Among other Things, he gives a particular Account of thoſe great Miracles which the Apoſtles did for the Confirmation of their Doctrine.*

Thus far this learned Author; to which we ſhall add, that we do not intend to confine ourſelves abſolutely to the bare Facts as they ſtand related in the *Hiſtory of the four Evangeliſts*, and the *Acts of the Apoſtles*. This would afford but little Inſtruction or Improvement to the curious and inquiſitive Reader. We have therefore conſulted Authors of the greateſt Eminence for Learning and Ability, from whom we have collected the beſt Materials; by means whereof, I will be bold to ſay, this will be as complete a Work, when

when finiſh'd, as is in the power of human Capacity to furniſh out.

With Regard to the *Life of Chriſt*, it would be preſumptuous to add any Thing to what we find related of him in the *four Goſpels*; yet, in the Courſe of that, we have many Occaſions offer'd to explain difficult Paſſages, to reconcile ſeeming Contradictions in the ſeveral Narrations of the ſacred Penmen, to explain many of the *Jewiſh* Rites and Ceremonies, which a common Reader may not be rightly inform'd of, and to anſwer numberleſs Objections, which *Deiſts* and the Enemies of Divine Revelation have thrown as Stumbling-blocks in the Way of unwary *Chriſtians*, whereby many have been ſeduced from their Faith, to the eternal Ruin of their Souls.

As to the *Lives of the Apoſtles*, the Account of which is but very ſhort in the *Acts*, we ſhall extend to a much greater Length, and take in whatever we find related by other Authors. Nor ſhall we give the *Hiſtory of the Lives, Tranſactions, Sufferings, and Deaths of the Apoſtles* only, but likewiſe of the *four Evangeliſts*; all which conſider'd, we doubt not but the ſerious and intelligent Reader will find this the moſt agreeable and entertaining Hiſtory, the moſt uſeful and inſtructive Narrative that he can poſſibly peruſe himſelf, or recommend to the peruſal of his Family, Neighbours, or Friends.

We judge it unneceſſary to mention the Titles of the Books, or Names of Authors we have quoted in this Work, becauſe it would have too much interrupted the Thread of the Story, nor have contributed any Thing to the Reader's Information.

THE

THE LIFE, SUFFERINGS, &c. OF JESUS CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

From the Birth of CHRIST *to the Beginning of the* Firſt Paſſover.

AS an Introduction to the following Hiſtory, it may be proper ſo inform our Readers of the true Signification of the Word *Goſpel*, the Title of the four Treatiſes from whence this Narrative is taken.

The Word *Evangelium* ſignifies, in general, *good News*, and is of the ſame Import with our *Saxon* Word *Goſpel*; only in the ſacred Uſe of them both there ſeems to be a *Metonymy*, whereby the Words that denote *good News*, are ſet to ſignify *the Hiſtory* of that good News, *viz.* of the Birth and Life, the Miracles and Doctrine, the Death and Reſur-

rection of our Saviour *Chriſt*; all of which, put together, do make up the joyful Tidings, which we call the *Goſpel:* And from this Etymology of the Words, the Perſons who have recorded the Life and Actions of our Saviour, are called *Evangeliſts*, or Writers of the Goſpel. The Works of this Kind, which are received as canonical, are but four, *viz.* that of St. *Matthew*, St. *Mark*, St. *Luke* and St. *John*; but the ſpurious Pieces which are handed down to us (even tho' ſeveral of them be loſt) do exceed the Number of forty. The Truth is, the antient Hereticks began generally with attacking the Goſpels, in order either to maintain their Errors or excuſe them. To this Purpoſe ſome rejected all the genuine Goſpels, and ſubſtituted others that were ſpurious, in their Room. This produced the Goſpels of *Apelles*, *Baſilides*, *Cerinthus*, the *Ebonites* and *Gnoſticks*. Others corrupted the true Goſpels, by ſuppreſſing whatever gave them any Trouble, and inſerted whatever might favour their erroneous Doctrines. Thus the *Nazarenes* corrupted the original Goſpel of St. *Matthew*, as the *Marcionites* did that of St. *Luke*; while the *Alogians* rejected St. *John*, as the *Ebonites* did St. *Matthew*; and the *Valentinians* only acknowledged St. *John*, as the *Corinthians* did St. *Mark*.

The two principal Prophets who determine the Period when our Lord was to appear in the World, are *Daniel* and *Haggai*. *Daniel* foretels, that at *the End of the ſeventy* prophetical *Weeks*, i. e. at the Expiration of our hundred Years after the Building of the Walls of *Jeruſalem*, the *Meſſiah ſhall come*, Daniel ix. 25. and *Haggai* propheſies, that before the Deſtruction of the ſecond Temple, (even when the *Scepter was departed from* Judah,

Gen. xlix. 10.) the *Deſire of all Nations ſhall come*, and by his frequent perſonal Appearance in the Temple, made the *Glory of the latter Houſe* much *greater than that of the former*, Hagg. ii, 7, *&c.*

In the Year of the World 3999, the Time foretold by theſe Prophets for the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Evangeliſt St. *Luke* gives the Account of the Birth of his great Fore-runner, *John the Baptiſt*. But firſt we ſhall premiſe ſomething of his Character and Miſſion from Scripture.

There are two Places in the Prophets referred to, both by our Saviour and his Evangeliſts, wherein the *Baptiſt* is deſcribed under this Character. The former is in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *The Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make ſtreight, in the Deſart, an Highway for our God*, Chap. xl. 3. and the latter (which is more plain and expreſs) is in *Malachi*, *Behold I will ſend my Meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the Way before me*, &c. Chap. iii. 1. Both the Paſſages allude to Harbingers, and ſuch other Officers, as upon the Journies of Princes, are employed to take Care that the Ways be levelled and put in Order, and all ſuch Obſtructions removed, as might hinder their Paſſage, or render it leſs commodious: And the Manner in which the *Baptiſt* thus prepared the Way of the Lord, was by his Preaching, and by his Baptiſm. By his Preaching he endeavoured to bring the *Jews* to a due Senſe of their Sins; to abate their Confidence in being of *Abraham*'s Seed, and punctual Obſervers of the ceremonial Law; and to forewarn all of the dreadful Effects of God's Anger, who did not bring forth Fruits worthy of Repentance. And by his Baptiſm, when adminiſtered to ſuch Perſons as

were under the Obligation of the Law, he plainly ſhewed, that he was therein admitting them to ſome Privileges, which they had not before, *viz.* the Remiſſion of their Sins upon their Faith and Obedience to him, who was the Meſſenger of the Covenant. Since therefore the *Baptiſt* was born ſix Months before our Saviour, and entered upon his Miniſtry ſix Months before our Saviour began his; and ſince no Part of his Doctrine terminated in himſelf, and his Baptiſm referred every one to *Chriſt* for Acceptance and Salvation; he is very properly ſaid to be his Harbinger, *a Meſſenger ſent to prepare his Way before him*, or to ſet all Things in Readineſs for his Approach, by putting an End to the Old, and making an Entrance into the new Diſpenſation; in which Senſe he is repreſented by the Fathers, as a Kind of middle Partition between the Law and the Goſpel; of the Law, as a Thing now come to a Period, and of the Goſpel, as commencing under him, who was ſhortly to make his Appearance. But to proceed in our Narrative.

While his Father *Zacharias* (who was a Prieſt of the eighth Courſe, *viz.* the Courſe of *Abiah*) was executing his Office at *Jeruſalem*, (which was in the latter Part of the Reign of *Herod the Great*) it came to his Lot to enter the Temple with his Cenſer in his Hand, to burn Incenſe, while the People without where offering up their Supplications in the Court, that was called the *Court of Iſrael*. At the Altar of Incenſe he was greatly ſurprized with the Sight of an Angel ſtanding on the Right-Side of it; but the Angel ſoon diſſipated his Fears, with the joyful News, that God intended to bleſs him with a Son, whoſe Name ſhould be *John*, who ſhould prove a Per-

a Perſon of uncommon Merit, and be appointed to the Office of *Harbinger* to the *Meſſiah*, who, in a ſhort Time, was to make his Appearance.

The Senſe of his own great Age, as well as his Wife's long Sterility, made *Zacharias* expreſs a Kind of Diffidence in his Promiſe; and for his farther Satisfaction, deſires ſome Miracle in Confirmation of it: Whereupon the Angel let him know, *That he was no leſs than* Gabriel, *a ſpecial Attendant on God's Throne, and diſpatched on purpoſe to inform him of this great Happineſs; but that ſince he was ſo incredulous, as to require a Sign, he ſhould have ſuch an one as would be both a Puniſhment of his Unbelief, and a Confirmation of his Faith; for until the Birth of the Child, he ſhould be both deaf and dumb:* Which accordingly came to paſs; for when he came to the People who waited to receive his Benediction, he made Signs, that he was not able to ſpeak to them, and they thence inferred, that he had ſeen ſome extraordinary Viſion within. After the Time of Miniſtration, however, was over, he returned home, and it was not long before his Wife *Elizath* perceived herſelf with Child, tho' her Modeſty made her conceal it for the Space of five Months.

Before we proceed in the Thread of our Hiſtory, the following explanatory Notes, on what we have already ſaid, we judge very neceſſary for the Inſtruction of the Reader.

Some of the Fathers were of Opinion that this *Zacharias* was, at this Time High-prieſt, upon a falſe Suppoſition that the Offering of Incenſe was reſerved for the High-prieſt only: But beſides the Teſtimony of *Joſephus*, who tells us expreſly, that *Simon* the Son of *Boethus*, was High-prieſt this Year; it appears from

from St. *Luke* himſelf, that *Zacharias* was no more than an ordinary Prieſt of the Family or Courſe of *Abiah*, which of the four and twenty Courſes appointed by *David* for the Service of the Temple, when it ſhould be built, was the eighth, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 10. For tho' it was the High-prieſt's Prerogative, on the great Day of Expiation, to enter into *the Holy of Holies*, and there burn Incenſe, which no ordinary Prieſt might do, *Levit.* xvi. 12. yet, in the common Service of the Day, each Prieſt, whoſe Lot it was, went every Morning and Evening into the *Sanctum* or Body of the Temple, and their burnt the daily Incenſe upon the Altar, which was placed before the Veil of the *moſt holy Place*, Exod. xxx. 6, *&c.* For theſe and ſeveral other Reaſons, which Annotators have produced, it ſeems plain that *Zacharias* could not poſſibly be High-prieſt at this Time; and, whatever Credit may be given to the Tradition, That by the Order of *Herod the Great*, he was put to Death, between the Porch and the Altar, *viz.* in the Incloſure that ſurrounded the Altar of Burnt-Offering; and that, when every one was ignorant of his Murther, a certain Prieſt, thinking that he ſtaid too long, entered into the Temple and found him dead, and his Blood congealed upon the Ground, and at the ſame Time heard a Voice, that it ſhould be never wiped out, until his Revenger came: Whatever Credit, I ſay, may be given to this Tradition, it was doubtleſs upon this Foundation that many of the Antients thought that *Zacharias*, the Father of *John the Baptiſt*, was that *Zachariah*, Son of *Barachiah*, mentioned by our Saviour in the Goſpel, whoſe Blood was ſhed *between the Temple and the Altar.*

St.

St. *Luke* in particular takes Nocice, that the Time when our Lord's Fore-runner was to be conceived, was in the Reign of *Herod*, Son of *Antipater* (for it was *Herod Antipas* that put him to Death) commonly called *the Great*, who, under the *Romans*, fought his Way to the Government of the *Jews*, and came to his Throne by the Slaughter of their *Sanhedrim*; by which Means he extinguiſhed all the Dominion, which, till that Time, they held in the Tribe of *Judah*; not in a ſingle Perſon indeed, (for that was extinguiſhed in the *Aſmonæan* Family) but in a ſelect Number out of the royal Tribe; and ſo verified the Prophecy of old *Jacob*, Gen. xlix. 10. *That the Scepter*, or Government *was departed from* Judah, *and the Lawgiver from his Feet*, which was a certain Sign that *Shilo*, i. e. the *Meſſiah*, was ſhortly to come.

St. *Luke* alſo gives us this farther Account, both of the Birth of *John the Baptiſt*, and of our *Saviour*. Leaving the Hiſtory of our Saviour a little, he comes, Ch. iii. to give us an Account of *John Baptiſt*, his Entrance on his publick Miniſtry, and fulfilling of it. *John Baptiſt* had ſix Months Seniority of our Saviour, and probably appeared ſo long before him to the World, as a publick Miniſter; the Time of his Beginning was in the fifteenth Year of *Tiberius Cæſar*. This was he who next ſucceeded *Auguſtus* (for all the *Roman* Emperors, after *Julius Cæſar*, were called *Cæſars*, as all the Kings of *Egypt* were called *Pharaohs*) he was as wicked a Prince as moſt who ruled the *Roman* Empire. *Herod the Great*, (in whoſe Time *Chriſt* was born) was ſome Time ſince dead; *Archelaus* began to reign in his Stead, as a King; but the *Romans* changing the Government from a *Monarchy* to a *Tetrarchy* (that is, a Govern-

Government of Four) *Archelaus* had only the Government of *Judea*, *Herod Antipas*, another Son of *Herod the Great*, had the Government of *Galilee* under the Title of *Tetrarch*, and *Philip*, another of his Sons, had the Government of *Iſurea* and *Trachonitis*, under the ſame Title of *Tetrarch*; and one *Lyſanias* had the Government of *Abilene* (all four Strangers) ſo as at this Time the *Jews* were all under the Government of Foreigners, the Scepter of Government was wholly departed from *Judah*. *Archelaus* was ſoon after ſent into *France*, and *Pontius Pilate* made *Procurator* or Governor of *Judea* and *Samaria*. *Annas* and *Caiphas* were the High-prieſts. By the Law of God, the eldeſt Son of the Family of *Aaron* was to be the High-prieſt. How there came to be, at this Time, two High-Prieſts, is not agreed among Interpreters. We muſt know, that at this Time the *Jews* were under the Power of the *Romans*, and all Things among them were out of Order. Some ſay the *Jews* had Liberty to chuſe their High-prieſt, but then the Conquerors would turn them out, and ſell the Place to another. Others, that the High-prieſt had his Deputy with the ſame Title. Others that the High-prieſt of the former Year, ſtill retained his Title for another Year. Certain it is, that at this Time there were two who bare the Title of High-prieſt, tho' uncertain on what Account.

The ſeveral Courſes of the Prieſts begun on the Sabbath-Day, and continued to ſerve till the Sabbath following; but becauſe they were now increaſed to a greater Number (*Joſephus* tell us, that there was no leſs than a thouſand in each Courſe) there were ſeveral Parts of the prieſtly Office (whereof burning of Incenſe was one) which the

Cour'e,

Courſe, that then miniſtered, ſeems to have divided among themſelves, for the Week that they were to attend.

A *Jewiſh* Congregation, for the moſt Part, conſiſted of all the Prieſts of the Courſe which was then in waiting, of the *Levites*, and of certain ſtationary Men, as they called them, who repreſented the Body of the People, beſides ſome other accidental Worſhippers; and when the Prieſt went into the Sanctuary, or within the firſt Veil, to offer Incenſe, Notice was given by the Sound of a Bell, that it was then the Time of Prayer, whereupon every one preſent offered up his Supplications to God ſilently: And tho' this ſilent Prayer was not commanded, yet there ſeems a manifeſt Alluſion to it, in thoſe Words of St. *John*, where, *at the offering of Incenſe with the Prayers of the Saints*, 'tis ſaid, *there was Silence in Heaven for half an Hour*, Rev. viii. 1, *&c.* Nor is that Paſſage in *Eccleſiaſticus*, Ch. l. 19, 20. any bad Repreſentation of this Part of the *Jewiſh* Worſhip, *And the People beſought the Lord, the moſt high, by Prayer, before him that is merciful, till the Solemnity of the Lord was ended; and then he went down* (viz. *Simon* the High-prieſt) *and lift up his Hands over the whole Congregation of the Children of* Iſrael, *to give the Bleſſing of the Lord with his Lips.*

The *Jews* had a peculiar Notion, that ſuch like Apparitions as appeared to *Zacharias* in the Temple, were always fatal to thoſe that had them, and a ſure Token of their inſtantaneous Death, *Gen.* xvi. 31, 22, 30. *Exod.* xx. 19, *&c.* but if this were ſo, it is natural for Men to be affrightened at ſudden and unuſual Things, eſpecially at any divine Appearance, whe her of God himſelf tak-

ing a viſible Shape, or authorizing an Angel to do ſo. For tho' God does not make the Appearances to affrighten us, yet ſuch is the Imbecility of our Nature, that we cannot but be ſtartled at them; and Reaſon good there is, that God, by this Means, ſhould both declare his own Glory and Majeſty and humble his poor Creatures, in order to make them more ſuſceptible of his divine Revelations.

The Word *Meſſiah* is derived from the *Hebrew Machach*, to *anoint*, and is the very ſame with *anointed* in *Greek*. It is a Name ſometimes given to the Kings and High-prieſts of the *Hebrews*, 1 *Sam.* xii. 5, *&c. Pſal.* cv. 15. but principally, and by way of Eminency, it belongs to that ſovereign Deliverer, who was expected by the *Jews*, and whom they vainly expect, even to this Day, ſince he is already come at the appointed Time, in the Perſon of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*. The *Jews* were uſed to anoint Kings, High-prieſts and ſometimes Prophets. *Saul*, *David* *Solomon* and *Joaſh*, Kings of *Judah*, received the royal Unction; *Aaron* and his Sons received the ſacerdotal; and *Eliſha* received the prophetical, at leaſt God ordered *Elijah* to give it to him. But now, tho' *Jeſus Chriſt* united in his own Perſon, all the Offices of Prophet, Prieſt, and King, yet we no were find, that he received any outward or ſenſible Unction; and therefore the Unction, which the Prophets and Apoſtles ſpeak of, with regard to him, is the ſpiritual and internal Unction of Grace and the Holy Ghoſt, of which the outward Unction was no more than a Figure and Symbol.

The Words of *Zacharias* to the Angel are, *Whereby ſhall I know this? For I am an old Man, and*

and my Wife well ſtricken in Years, Luke i. 18. much of the ſame Import with thoſe of *Abraham*, upon a like Occaſion, *Whereby ſhall I know that I ſhall inherit the Land of* Canaan? Gen. xviii. 8. How then came it to paſs that *Abraham* was gratified with a Sign on the ſame Requeſt, for which *Zacharias* was puniſhed with Blindneſs? Now, though there may be a great Similitude in the Words which are ſpoken by ſeveral Perſons, yet there may, at the ſame Time, be a very conſiderable Difference in the Heart and Habit of Mind, from whence they proceed, which we muſt allow God can ſee much better than we can perceive by Words. In Relation to *Abraham* then, the holy Spirit bears him Teſtimouy, that *he ſtaggered not at the Promiſe thro' Unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God, being fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed he was able to perform*, Rom. iv. 20 21. and therefore if he asked a Sign, it was not to beget, but to nouriſh and confirm this Faith in him. But in *Zacharias* the asking of a Sign ſavoured of perfect Infidelity, in that he believed not an Angel appearing to him in the Name of the Lord, and in a Place where evil Angels durſt not come: An Angel telling him *his Prayers were heard*, which evil Angels could not know; and acquainted him with Things that tended to the Glory of God, the Completion of his Promiſes, and the Welfare of Mankind, which evil Angels would not do. His Puniſhment therefore was the juſt Reſult of his Unbelief; but (what ſhews the Mercy of God in inflicting it) it was a Puniſhment of ſuch a Nature, as carried with it an Anſwer to his Deſire, being no more than a Privation of Speech, until the Words of the Angel were fulfilled.

Let us now proceed in our Narrative. Six Months after *Elizabeth*'s Conception, the ſame Angel *Gabriel* was ſent to *Nazareth*, a City of *Galilee*, to a Virgin, named *Mary*, a near Relation to *Elizabeth*, and of the Houſe of *David*, who had lately been eſpouſed to one *Joſeph*, a Perſon of the ſame Pedigree, indeed, but of no higher Profeſſion than that of a Carpenter. The Angel approaching the pious Maid, began to congratulate her with *being highly in the Favour of God, and bleſſed above all the reſt of her Sex, becauſe ſhe ſhould have the Happineſs of bearing a Son, called by the Name of* Jeſus *or* Saviour, *the long expected* Meſſiah, *to whom God would give the Throne of his Father* David, *and of whoſe Sovereignty and Dominion there ſhall be no End.*

Conſcious of her own Virtue, and yet ſurprized at this uncommon Appearance and Salutation, the holy Virgin began to expoſtulate with the heavenly Meſſenger, the Poſſiblity of the Thing, ſince ſhe had all along lived in a ſtrict State of Virginity: But the Angel, to ſatisfy her in this Particular told her, *That this wonderful Work was to be effected by the inviſible Power and Operation of the* Holy Ghoſt; *and to ſhew her that nothing was impoſſible to the Almighty, gave her to underſtand, that her Couſin* Elizabeth (*notwithſtanding her old Age, and former Sterility*) *had been now ſix Months with Child:* Whereupon the holy Virgin humbly acquieſced in whatever God had determined to do with her, and as ſoon as the Angel was departed, made Preparations for her Journey to *Hebron*, where her Couſin *Elizabeth* lived.

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As ſoon as ſhe arrived at *Zachariah*'s Houſe, *Elizabeth*, upon hearing her firſt Salutation, perceived that the Child ſprang in her Womb, and being inſpired with the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſhe cried out, *Bleſſed art thou above thy Sex! Bleſſed is the Fruit of thy Body! And how vaſt is my Felicity, to be viſited by the Mother of my Lord!* And having, by the ſame prophetick Spirit, aſſured *Mary* of the Accompliſhments of every Thing that the Angel had told her, ſhe ſo tranſported the bleſſed Virgin, that ſhe broke out into a Rapture of Thankſgiving to God, wherein ſhe recounted his Mercies, and the Propiſes which he had made to the People of *Iſrael*, and which, by making her the bleſſed Inſtrument of them, he was now about to fulfil.

That we may rightly underſtand every Particular as we go on, let us conſider the following Obſervations.

Nazareth was a City of the *Lower Galilee*, ſituate in the South Part of that Province, and ſo not far from the Confines of *Samaria* to the South, and nearer to the Territories of *Tyre* and *Sidon* to the North-weſt. According to Mr. *Maundrell*'s Account, in his Journey from *Aleppo*, it is at preſent only an inconſiderable Village lying in a Kind of round concave Valley, on the Top of an high Hill. Here is a Convent built over (what is ſaid to be) the Place of the Annunciation, or where the bleſſed Virgin received the powerful Meſſage brought her by the Angel. Here is likewiſe the Houſe of *Joſeph*, the very ſame (as the Friars of the Convent tell you) wherein the Son of God lived for near thirty Years in Subjection to Man; and not far from hence, they ſhew you the Synagogue wherein our bleſſed Saviour preached that Sermon,

Luke

Luke iv. 16. whereby his Countrymen were ſo exaſperated, that they *roſe up and thruſt him out of the City*, and led him to the Brow of the Hill, whereon their City was built, *that they might caſt him down headlong*, Luke iv. 28, 29. for which Reaſon that Brow is, to this Day, called the *Mountain of Precipitation.*

To a Virgin, eſpouſed to a Man, whoſe Name was Joſeph, *of the Houſe of* David; which Words, in my Opinion, might be placed in this Manner, —— *To a Virgin of the Houſe of* David; *eſpouſed to a Man, whoſe Name was* Joſeph, *and the Virgin's Name was* Mary; becauſe this agrees better with the Words of the Angel, *The Lord God ſhall give him the Throne of his father* David. For, ſince the Angel had plainly told the Virgin, that ſhe ſhould have this Son without the Knowledge of any Man, it was not *Joſeph*'s, but *Mary*'s being of the Houſe of *David*, that made *David* his Father. Of her immediate Parents, however, the Scripture tells us nothing, not ſo much as their Names; but from Tradition we learn, that ſhe was the Daughter of *Joachim* and *Anna*, of the royal Tribe of *Judah*, and yet related to the Race of *Aaron*, becauſe *Elizabeth*, the Wife of *Zacharias*, was her Couſin.

Eſpouſing or betrothing was nothing elſe but a ſolemn Promiſe of Marriage, made by two Perſons to each other, at ſuch a Diſtance of Time as they agreed upon. The Manner of performing this Eſpouſal was either by a Writing, or by a Piece of Silver given to the Bride, or by Cohabitation. The Writing that was prepared on theſe Occaſions, ran in this Form. *On ſuch a Day of ſuch a Month, in ſuch a Year*, A, *the Son of* A, *has*

ſaid

ſaid to B, *the Daughter of* B, *Be thou my Spouſe, according to the Law of* Moſes *and the* Iſraelites, *and I will give thee, for the Portion of Virginiey, the Sum of two hundred* Zuzims, *as it is ordained by the Law. And the ſaid* B *has conſented to become his Spouſe upon theſe Conditions, which the ſaid* A *has promiſed to perform upon the Day of Marriage. To this the ſaid* A *obliges himſelf; and for this he engages all his Goods, even as as far as the Cloak which he wears upon his Shoulder. Moreover he promiſes to perform all that is intended in Contracts of Marriage, in Favour of the* Iſraelitiſh *Women. Witneſſes,* A, B, C. The Promiſe by a Piece of Silver, and without Writing, was made before Witneſſes; when the young Man ſaid to his Miſtreſs, *Receive this Piece of Silver as a Pledge that you ſhall become my Spouſe.* Laſtly, as the Engagement by Cohabitation (according to the *Rabbins*) was allowed by Law, *Deut.* xxiv. 1. but it had been wiſely forbidden by the Antients, becauſe of the Abuſes that might happen, and to prevent the Inconvenience of clandeſtine Marriages. After ſuch Eſpouſal was made, (which was generally when the Parties were young) the Woman continued with her Parents ſeveral Months, if not ſome Years (at leaſt till ſhe was arrived at the Age of *Puberty*) before ſhe was brought home, and her marriage conſummated: For ſo we find that *Sampſon*'s Wife remained with her Parents a conſiderable Time after Eſpouſal, *Judg.* xiv. 15. and that the bleſſed Virgin was diſcernably with Child before ſhe and her intended Husband came together, *Matth.* i. 18. Whether this Method of betrothing was at firſt ordained, or only approved by God, *Deut.* xx. 7. or whether it be now of any Obligation to us *Chriſtians*, we ſhall not pretend

to determine. It is certain that it has nothing that is typical, nothing of the carnal Ordinance in it, but ſomething very proper and convenient, *viz.* that the Parties contracted may have ſome intermediate Time to think ſeriouſly of the great Change they are going to make in their Conditions; to diſcourſe more freely together about their domeſtick Affairs; and to implore God's Bleſſing and Protection over them and theirs, in all the Changes and Chances of this mortal Life.

We read but of few Inſtances in Scripture, where Men had Names determined for them, by particular Appointment from Heaven, and before the Time of their Birth, as was that of our Saviour *Jeſus*; and as ſuch Names appear to be very ſignificant, ſo the the Perſons, diſtinguiſhed by them, were always remarkable for ſome extraordinary Qualities or Events, which their reſpective Names were deſigned to denote. Our Lord's Name, indeed, in Senſe and Subſtance, is the ſame with *Joſhua*, that famous Leader heretofore, who after the Death of *Moſes* ſettled the *Iſraelites* in the promiſed Land, and ſubdued the Enemies that oppoſed their Entrance into it. But as that earthly was a Figure of the heavenly *Canaan*, ſo was the Captain of *That*, an eminent Type of our Salvation; and, if he was worthy to be called a Saviour, much more is this *Jeſus*, what his Name imports; for he delivers us from the heavieſt of all Bondages, and from the moſt formidable of all Enemies, as he, and he only it is, who ſaves his People from their Sins.

The Prophets, in their Predictions, are very full and expreſs, tnat the *Meſſiah* ſhould be a great King, and deſcended from the Line of *David*; ſee *Pſal.* xi. 7. *Iſaiah* ix. 6, 7. *Dan.* vii. 14. and *Ezek.*

Ezek. xx. 27. and therefore the Angel, in his Meſſage to *Mary*, characteriſes him, as a Succeſſor to that Prince's Throne, and ſeems to accomodate himſelf, in ſome Meaſure, to the Prejudice of the *Jews*, and perhaps of the Virgin-Mother herſelf, who being bred up in the *Synagogue*, might expect that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be a temporal Prince, as well as they. But our Lord's *Kingdom* (as himſelf plainly declares) *is not of this World*, nor of the like Nature with other Empires upon Earth. His Reign is in the Hearts and Minds of Men; and his Dominion is in the Church, againſt which *the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail*, and in which, *of the Increaſe of his Government and Peace there ſhall be no End*, Iſaiah ix. 7. *until the End cometh, when he ſhall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father*, 1 Cor. xv. 24.

Mary's Expoſtulation is, *How ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not man?* Which ſome look upon as no more than a Reply of Admiration, and a Deſire to be farther informed in what Manner God intended to effect ſuch a wonderful Work; tho' others perceive in them ſome Indications of Diffidence, but what might be moſt excuſable, becauſe there had been no ſuch Precedent of the Divine Power made in the World, as to cauſe a *Virgin to conceive and bring forth a Son.*

Some are of Opinion that *Mary*, very early in her Life, had made a Vow of perpetual Chaſtity, and that *Joſeph* was appointed her Husband, not to live with her in the ordinary Uſe of Marriage, but meerly to be the Guardian of her Virginity: But beſides that, no Vows of perpetual Virginity were ever in Uſe among the *Jews*, it can hardly be ſuppoſed that a *Jewiſh* Woman, in whom Barrenneſs was reputed a Reproach, and looked upon as a

Curſe, would be ever induced to make one. Among the Precepts of the Law, the *Jewiſh* Doctors account Matrimony to be one, *Gen.* i. 28. from which none are exempted, but they, who devout themſelves wholly to the Study of the Law: but, ſince this was not the Bleſſed Virgin's Caſe, it reflects a Diſhonour upon her Memory to imagine, that after ſhe had entered into ſuch a Vow, ſhe ſhould admit of an Eſpouſal to *Joſeph*, which could be for no other End but meerly to mock him.

The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee, wherein, according to the uſual Modeſty of Scripture Language, is implied all that Action of the Holy Ghoſt, whereby the Bleſſed Virgin was inabled to become fruitful, and the Place of ordinary Generation was, in this Caſe, ſupplied. Now when this Action is in the Scripture repreſented as intirely the Work of God, and yet is attributed to the Holy Ghoſt in particular, we are not to underſtand it ſo peculiarly his, that the two other Perſons, ſubſiſting in the Godhead, ſhould have no Concern in it; for here that Rule of the Schools takes Place, that the entire Union of the Divine Nature makes all ſuch Actions common to all three, as do not refer to the Properties and Relations, by which they ſtand diſtinguiſhed from each other. As therefore the Holy Spirit began the firſt Creation by moving (or brooding as it were) upon the Face of the Waters, ſo did he here begin the new Creation, by conveying a Principle, or Power of Fruitfulneſs into a Perſon, otherwiſe incapable of it: And yet, as there, without the Father and his divine Word, or Son, *not any Thing was made, that was made*, John i. 3. ſo did he here bring this ſecond, *this Creation of a new Thing*, Jer. xxxi. 22.

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to Effect, by the ſame Co-operation of the whole undivided Trinity, as he had done the former.

Hebron very probably was the Place where *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* lived, and where *John the Baptiſt* was born, becauſe it was not only one of the Cities appointed for the Prieſts to dwell in, *Joſh.* xx. 7. but ſituated likewiſe in Mountains, which running croſs the Middle of *Judea* from South to North, gave to the Tract, which they run along, the Name of the *Hill-Country*. *Hebron* was ten Leagues diſtant from *Jeruſalem*, and about forty from *Nazareth*, which made it a long Journey for the Bleſſed Virgin, had not her Zeal to go and partake in her Couſin's Joy (more than to ſatisfy her Curioſity, whether what the Angel had told her was true) made her ſurmount all Difficulties.

'Tis ſaid, indeed, of the *Baptiſt*, that he *ſhould be filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his Mother's Womb*; and from hence ſome have thought, that this extraordinary Motion of the Child in *Elizabeth*, was an Act of his own, and proceeded from a Senſation of Joy, which himſelf felt at the Salutation of the Bleſſed Virgin: But, beſides that, *being filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his Mother's Womb*, means no more than that the Power of the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be diſcerned to be upon him very early. It is certain, that Infants in the Womb are not capable of any Joy themſelves, as having no Apprehenſions of Good to be enjoyed, or Evil to be avoided; but as they are ſenſibly affected with the Joy, or Grief, or Surprize of the Parent, to whom they are united, the uncommon Motion of the Child, at this Conjuncture, muſt be occaſioned by the Joy which tranſported his Mother.

It was cuſtomary among the *Jews*, for pious and devout Perſons, when they found themſelves inſpired, upon great and ſolemn Occaſions to celebrate the Praiſes of God, in Songs made on purpoſe. Several of this Kind we meet with in the *Old Teſtament*, but this of the Bleſſed Virgin is the firſt that occurs in the *New*, and for the Majeſty of its Stile, the Nobleneſs of its Sentiments, and that Spirit of Piety, which runs through the Whole, is inferior to none.

About three Months *Mary* continued with her Couſin *Elizabeth*, and then returned home. *Elizabeth*, not long after, was delivered of a Son; but on the eighth Day, when the Child was to be circumciſed and named, his Relations and Friends were not a little ſurprized to hear that he was to be called *John*, ſince none of the Family bore that Name; but their Surprize became much greater, when they found, that upon this Occaſion, his Father's Speech was immediately reſtored to him, which he employed in the Praiſes of Almighty God, who had wrought ſuch Prodigies among them.

The Holy Virgin being returned to *Nazareth*, ſtill concealed the Myſtery, which God had wrought in her, from her eſpouſed Husband, but her pregnant Symptoms ſoon diſcovered it; and, though her Deportment had been extreamly chaſt and modeſt, yet he might be well aſſured that ſhe was with Child. This raiſed no little Concern in his Breaſt; but, being a merciful good Man, and unwilling, either to expoſe the Honour of her Family, which he thought ſhe had ſtained, or to inflict publick Puniſhment upon her, according to the Sentence of the Law, he reſolved upon a Separation

paration with the utmoſt Privacy: But before he came to put it in Execution, an Angel from Heaven appeared to him in a Viſion, informing him, *That his Wife's Conception was the immediate Work of the Holy Ghoſt, and that ſhe ſhould bear a Son, the ſame Perſon whom the Prophet had foretold under the Name of* Emanuel, *or* God with us. Whereupon *Joſeph* was not diſobedient to the heavenly Viſion, but taking the Holy Virgin home to him, he lived with her, to all outward Appearance, in conjugal Love, though he certainly had no carnal Knowledge of her, till ſhe was delivered of her Firſt-born Son, who, by a lineal Deſcent, was true Heir to the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, as ſprung from the Houſe of *David*.

The *Jews* had a poſitive Command in their Law, that no Child ſhould be circumciſed before the eighth Day, becauſe the Mother, for ſeven Days was reputed unclean, and ſo was the Child by touching her, *Levit.* xii. 1, 2. but the Law appointed no certain Place, in which Circumciſion was to be done, nor any certain Perſon that was to perform it; neither did it injoin that the Child ſhould have his Name given him at that Time, only the Cuſtom prevailed of doing it then, becauſe, when God inſtituted the Rite, he changed the Names of *Abraham* and *Sarah*.

The *Jews*, from the firſt Beginning, ſeem to have made it a Point of Religion, to give ſuch Names to their Children, as were ſignificative either of God's Mercy to them, or of their Duty to God; and from the Paſſage now before us (tho' it was no antient Uſage) it ſeems to be a Cuſtom introduced, at leaſt in the Days of *Zacharias*, to call Children by the Name of their Parents, or the neareſt Relations

lations (as it is uſual now among us) if there was no particular Reaſon to the contrary.

The Words in the Text, as we tranſlate them, are,——Joſeph *her Husband being a juſt Man:* But if he was a juſt Man, and was ſatisfied that his intended Wife had, ſome way or other, violated her Chaſtity (as he knew nothing to the contrary at that Time) inſtead of ſcreening her Crime, he ought to have brought her to Puniſhment, *Deut.* xxii. 20, 21. Now it is to be obſerved, that upon the Diſcovery of his Wife's Pregnancy, *Joſeph* had the Choice of three Things, 1ſt, Either he might, notwithſtanding this, have taken her to his Houſe, as his Wife, becauſe the Law of Divorce laid none under an Obligation, but gave a Permiſſion only, in Caſe of ſome diſcovered Uncleanneſs, to put away the Wife: Or 2dly, He might give her a Bill of Divorcement, either in publick or in private, (for that was left to his Option) either before two or three Witneſſes, or before a proper Magiſtrate, and that without ſpecifying any Crime againſt her: Or 3dly, He might, according to the Law, have brought her upon her Trial, whether, in the Matter of her Pregnancy, ſhe had ſuffered a Rape, or was herſelf conſenting, *Deut.* xxii. 23, 24. Had therefore *Joſeph* done the firſt of theſe, he muſt have acted contrary to his own Honour, and have incurred the common Reproach, that he, *who retained an Adultereſs, is a Fool.* Had he done the laſt of theſe, he was not ſure of convicting her, becauſe, upon Examination, it might appear that ſhe had been forced; and, in that Caſe, the Man that did it was to die, *Deut.* xxii. 25. or ſhe might have been with Child before her betrothing, and, in that Caſe,

Caſe, ſhe was only obliged to marry the Perſon that had abuſed her, Verſe 28, 29. Upon the Whole, therefore, *Joſeph* thought it the beſt and juſteſt Way to proceed upon the Foot of a Divorce. *Mary*'s being viſibly with Child, was Reaſon ſufficient to authorize his parting with her; but he did not know for certain, that ſhe was guilty of Adultery, or that conſequently ſhe deſerved to die; and therefore he did not think it right, by bringing her upon her Trial, to expoſe her.

The common Way of Separation among the *Jews* was, by the Man's giving the Woman a Letter of Divorce. This, in their Language, is called *Gheth*, and the Subſtance of it is to this Effect. *On ſuch a Day, Month, and Year, and at ſuch a Place, I* A, *divorce you voluntarily, put you away, and reſtore you to your Liberty, even you* B, *who was heretofore my Wife, and I permit you to marry whom you pleaſe.* When the Day of Divorce comes, the *Rabbi*, that attends, having ſtrictly examined both Parties, and finding that they are reſolved to part, bids the Woman open her Hands, and when ſhe has received the Deed, cloſe them both together, leſt it ſhould chance to fall to the Ground. The Man, when he gives her the Parchment (for on Parchment the Bill of Divorce was to be wrote in the Preſence of two *Rabbins*, and with many other trifling Circumſtances) tells her, *Here is thy Divorce. I put thee away from me, and leave thee at Liberty to marry whom thou pleaſeſt*; and when the Woman has taken it, and the *Rabbi* read it over once more, ſhe is intirely free. There is in this Ceremony, however, to be remarked, that they always endeavour to have ten or twelve Perſons at it,

it, beſides the two Witneſſes, who ſign the Deed. When therefore *Joſeph* intended to diſmiſs *Mary* privately, it could not be by having no Witneſſes at all, but as few as the Nature of the Thing would bear, and by giving her the Letter of Divorcement into her own Hand, which ſhe might ſuppreſs, if ſhe thought fit, or by inſerting no Accuſation againſt her in it, in Caſe it came to be read before the Company.

This Viſion was in a Dream, and while he was aſleep, and Dreams, we know, was one Way whereby God revealed his Mind to People formerly, *Job* xxxiv. 14, 15. whereby he made himſelf known to the Prophets, *Numb.* xii. 6. and not to Prophets only, but to Pagan Princes ſometimes, as appears by the Inſtances both of *Pharaoh* and *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Gen.* xli. 1. *Dan.* ii. 1. But how to diſtinguiſh divine from natural Dreams, it is difficult to ſay, unleſs it be by the clear and diſtinct Series of their Repreſentation, and the forceable Impreſſion which they leave upon Mens Spirits; whereas natural Dreams, for the moſt part, are rambling and inconſiſtent, and *whoſo regardeth them* (ſays the wiſe Son of *Sirach*) *is like him who catcheth at a Shadow, or followeth after the Wind*, Eccleſ. xxxiv. 2.

The Word firſt-born, in Scripture, admits of various Significations: Sometimes (and moſt commonly indeed) it denotes the eldeſt of two or more Children, as *Eliab* is called the Firſt-born of *Jeſſe*, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 13. at others, the firſt that is born, without Regard to any elſe; as when God ſays to *Moſes*, *Sanctify me all the Firſt-born*, Exod. xiii. 2. In ſome Places it imports figuratively what is moſt dearly beloved by us; in which Sense God

God frequently calls the *Iſraelites* his Firſt-born; and in others, what is moſt remarkable for Greatneſs or Excellency, as God promiſes *David* (who was but a younger Brother of the Family) to make him the Firſt-born of the Kings of the Earth, Pſal. lxxxix. 28. In any of theſe three laſt Senſes our Saviour might very properly be called his Mother's Firſt-born Son, for as much as he was really her firſt Child; her moſt, and only Beloved, and the moſt illuſtrious of his Race: But then *Joſeph*'s not knowing his Wife until ſhe was delivered of her Firſt-born Son, ſeems to imply, that he knew her afterwards. Thoſe who maintain the perpetual Virginity of the Bleſſed Mother, tells us, that the *Greek* Word which we render *until*, in ſeveral Places of Scripture, has Relation only to the Time which precedes, and not to that which follows any Event; ſo that he knew her not until, may be taken in the ſame Senſe, as *Samuel* came not to ſee *Saul* till the Day of his Death, 1 *Sam.* xv. 35. *i. e.* he never came to ſee him: But (beſides that moſt of the Paſſages, which are produced to this Purpoſe, are far from coming up to the Caſe in Hand) ſince the Angel commanded *Joſeph* to take *Mary* as his Wife, without any Intimation that he ſhould not perform the Duty of an Husband to her, it is not eaſy to conceive, why he ſhould live twelve Years with her, and all that while deny that Duty, which both the Law and the Canons of the *Jews* command the Husband to pay his Wife, *Exod.* xxi. 10. If we imagine, that our Saviour would have been diſhonoured in any other's lying in the ſame Bed after him, we ſeem to forget, how much he humbled and debaſed himſelf, in lying in that Bed firſt, and then in a Stable, and a Manger. But, leaving this

Queſtion to thoſe who affect to be curious beyond what is written, we may ſafely conclude with St. *Baſil*,——*That, tho' it was neceſſary for the Completition of the Prophecy, that the Mother of our Lord ſhould continue a Virgin, until ſhe had brought forth her Firſt-born; yet, what ſhe was afterwards, 'tis idle to diſcuſs, becauſe it is no manner of Concern to the Myſtery.*

But let us proceed in our Hiſtory. Some Time before the Birth of *Chriſt*, *Auguſtus Cæſar* had iſſued out a general Edict, that all Perſons in the *Roman* Empire, with their Eſtates and Conditions, ſhould be regiſtered at certain appointed Places, according to thei. reſpective Provinces, Cities and Families. By Virtue of this Edict, *Joſeph* and his Wife *Mary*, being both of the Tribe of *Judah*, and Family of *David*, were obliged to go as far as *Bethlehem*, which was the Mother-City of their Tribe, there to have their Names and Eſtates enrolled. The great Conflux of People, upon this Occaſion, had already filled all the Inns, and Houſes of Reception, ſo that no better Place could be found for their Lodging, than a Stable, where they had not been long, before the Bleſſed Virgin was delivered of a Son, whom (herſelf performing the Office of a Midwife) ſhe bound in ſwaddling Clothes, and laid down to reſt in a Manger. But, notwithſtanding this Obſcurity of our Saviour's Birth, God was pleaſed, that very Night, by the Meſſage of an Angel, with a raddiant Light ſurrounding him, to make a pompous Revelation of it to certain poor Shepherds, who were attending their Flocks on the Plains of *Bethlehem*; and, after one Angel had delivered the joyful Tydings, an innumerable Company of the ſame celeſtial Choir,

Choir, broke out all together into this triumphant Doxology, *Glory be to God on high, Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Men.*

No ſooner was this heavenly Concert ended, but the overjoyed Shepherds, remembering the Signs which the Angel, before he diſappeared, had given them, immediately haſtened to *Bethlehem*, where they found the Virgin Mother, and *Joſeph* the ſuppoſed Father, attending the Godlike Babe, whom, in humble Reverence, they adored, and then returned, praiſing and extolling the Mercies of God, and, to the great Amazement of all that heard them, publiſhing, in all Places, what they knew concerning this Child.

The following Notes will explain what is difficult in the preceding Relation.

Bethlehem, where our Saviour was born (for there was another City of the ſame Name in the Tribe of *Zebulon*) is ſituate on the Declivity of an Hill, in the Tribe of *Judah*, two Leagues diſtant from *Jeruſalem*, and near thirty from *Nazareth*; ſo that we might juſtly wonder, how the Bleſſed Virgin, big with Child as ſhe was, could be able to take ſo long a Journey on Foot (for we hear of no other Voiture that ſhe had) were it not preſumable, that the Child, which ſhe conceived without Loſs of her Virginity, ſhe might be enabled to carry without the Senſe of any Load, or Uneaſineſs. What might poſſibly be the Motive of her taking ſuch a Journey, is not ſo well accounted for, by pretending that ſhe was an Heireſs, and the ſole Relict of her Family, which, upon this Occaſion, ſhe was obliged to repreſent; as it is by ſaying, that this was done by the eſpecial Providence and Appointment of God, who order-

ed this *Enrolement* (which *Auguſtus* intended to have had done before) to be delayed to this very Time, and then inſtigated the Bleſſed Virgin to accompany her Husband, that ſo *Chriſt* might be born in *Bethlehem*, according to the Prediction of the Prophet, *Micah* v. 2. and that his Lineage and Family might, at that Time, be known and preſerved in the publick Tables. The Birth indeed of our Bleſſed Saviour (more than its Extant or Riches) has made *Bethlehem*, ever ſince, a Place of high Renown, which is generally viſited by Pilgrims, and at preſent is furniſhed not only with a Convent of the *Latins*, but alſo with one of the *Greeks*, and another of the *Armenians*. Here are ſhewn you the very Place where our Saviour was born, the Manger in which he was laid, and the Cave or Grot in which the Bleſſed Virgin hid herſelf, and her Divine Babe, from the Malice of *Herod*, for ſome Time, before their Departure into *Egypt*. Here are ſhewn you likewiſe the Chapel of St. *Joſeph*, the ſuppoſed Father of our Lord; the Chapel of the *Innocents*, as alſo thoſe of St. *Jerom*, St. *Paula*, and *Euſtochium*. About half a Mile Eaſtward from the Town, you ſee the Field where the Shepherds were watching their Flocks, when they received the glad Tidings of the Birth of *Chriſt*, and, not far from the Field, the Village where they dwelt.

The Inns in the *Eaſt* are, even to this Day, large ſquare Buildings, but generally no more than one Story high, with a ſpacious Court in the Middle of them. Into this Court you enter in at a wide Gate, and, on the Right and Left-hand, meet with Rooms, that are appointed for Travellers to lodge in: Thoſe that come firſt take the

Rooms

Rooms they like beſt, but muſt be mindful to provide themſelves both with Bedding and Victuals, becauſe the Rooms are perfectly naked, and have no Furniture in them. 'Tis ſome Comfort however, that, for this Lodging, (ſuch as it is) you'll pay nothing, only a ſmall Toll to the Town, as you paſs along; and have no Reaſon to fear the Loſs of any Thing you bring with you, becauſe the Maſter of the Inn takes great Care of the Gate at Night, and is indeed reſponſible for the Safety of whatever Baggage you carry into your Lodging.

The Office of Midwife, which the holy Virgin herſelf perform'd, ſhe could not have done, to be ſure, had ſhe been delivered in the common Manner of other Women: But it was always the Opinion of the Church, from the Days of *Gregory Nazianzen*, until now (tho' before his Days there were ſome Opinions to the contrary) that, as there was no Sin in the Conception, ſo neither had the Virgin any Pains in the Production; for to her alone the Puniſhment of *Eve*, that *in Sorrow ſhe ſhould bring forth Children*, did not extend, becauſe where nothing of Sin was the Ingredient, there nothing of Miſery could cohabit.

Let us now go on with our Narrative. As ſoon as the Child was eight Days old, his Parents had him circumciſed according to the Law; when, purſuant to the Order which the Angel had given before his Conception, they called his Name *JESUS*; and, as ſoon as he was forty Days old, two other Ceremonies were performed, *viz.* the Purification of his Mother, and the Preſentation of her Firſt-born. Though therefore her Son's immaculate Conception needed not that Ceremony, yet

yet the Holy Virgin went up with *Joſeph* to *Jeruſalem*, there to offer the Sacrifices preſcribed by the Law for her Purification, and there to preſent her Son to the Lord, by delivering him into the Prieſt's Hands, and redeeming him again for five Shekels. But while ſhe was in the Temple performing this, old *Simeon*, who had long waited for the Redemption of *Iſrael*, and had been promiſed, by the Mouth of Heaven, that he ſhould not leave this World, before he had ſeen the illuſtrious Perſon who was to affect it, came in, and taking the bleſſed Infant in his Arms, in an heavenly Extaſy praiſed God for the Completion of his Promiſes, in letting him live to ſee the Saviour of the World, before he quitted it: And, no ſooner had he ended his divine Rapture, but an antient Widow of the Tribe of *Aſer*, whoſe Name was *Anna*, and whoſe Piety and Devotion, Severity of Life, and conſtant Frequentation of the public Worſhip, were very remarkable, coming into the Temple, and being herſelf likewiſe incited by a prophetic Spirit, gave God Thanks for his infinite Mercies; teſtifying that this Child was the true *Meſſiah*, and declaring the ſame to all ſuch devout Perſons in *Jeruſalem*, as waited for his Coming.

After theſe legal Performances, and ſolemn Teſtimonies in favour of the Child, *Joſeph* and *Mary* returned to *Bethlehem*, where, in a very ſhort Time, they were viſited by certain Strangers, coming from afar, of a Rank and Character ſomewhat extraordinary. For God, to notify the Birth of his Son to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*, cauſed an uncommon *Star* to ariſe in the *Eaſt*, which ſome Wiſemen or Aſtronomers, in thoſe Parts obſerving, and underſtanding withal, that this

this was to ſignify the Birth of the *Meſſiah* promiſed to the *Jews*, travelled to the Metropolis of *Judea*, there enquiring after this new-born Prince, that they might teſtify their Homage and Adoration of him. Their publick Character and Appearance, and their openly calling him the *King of the Jews*, put *Herod* into a great Conſternation, and the whole City indeed into no ſmall Cmomotion, as both fearing and hoping ſomething extraordinary.

Herod, however, being reſolved to deſtroy this ſuppoſed Rival in his Kingdom, immediately aſſembled the whole Body of the *Sanhedrim*, and demanded of them the very Place where the *Meſſiah* ſhould be born. *Bethlehem*, in the Land aſſigned to the Tribe of *Judah*, they told him was the very Spot which the Holy Spirit, by the Prophet *Micah*, had marked out for this great Event; which when he underſtood, he diſmiſſed the Aſſembly, and ſending for the above-mentioned Aſtrologers, with the utmoſt Secreſy, enquired of them the exact Time of the *Star*'s firſt Appearance, and then diſmiſſed them to *Bethlehem*, with Orders, to make diligent Search for the young Prinee, and, when they had diſcovered where he was, to bring him Word to *Jeruſalem*, that he, in like Manner, might go and pay him his Homage. This Pretence of *Worſhipping*, was no more than a Cloak to his Intentions of *Killing* the Child.

Theſe Perſons, however, having received the King's Inſtructions, departed towards *Bethlehem*, and, in their Way, were very agreeably ſurprized with a new Sight of the ſame miraculous Star, they had ſeen in their own Country, which went before them, and (like the *fiery Pillar* in the *Wilderneſs*)

derneſs) directed them to the very Houſe, where *Jeſus* and his Mother abode. As ſoon as they entered in, they fell proſtrate on the Ground, according to the *Eaſtern* Cuſtom, and having in this Manner adored the Child, preſented him with the richeſt Products of their Country, Gold and precious Odours, more particularly Frankincenſe and Myrrh.

Having thus performed their Homage and Congratulations, theſe *Eaſtern* Strangers were thinking of nothing more than to return to *Jeruſalem*, and acquaint *Herod* with the happy Diſcovery they had made; but God, who knew the Heart of that Tyrant, prevented them by a Viſion that very Night, which directed them into their own Country another Way; and, not long after, ſent an Angel to *Joſeph*, to acquaint him with *Herod*'s intended Cruelty againſt the Child, and to order him to retire into *Egypt*, with him, and his Mother, and there to continue, till farther Notice; which *Joſeph* inſtantly obeyed, and, for fear of Diſcovery, taking the Advantage of the Night, with all poſſible Speed ſet forward for *Egypt*.

In the mean Time *Herod* waited impatiently for the Return of the *Eaſtern* Sages; but at length finding himſelf deluded, and his moſt ſecret and ſubtle Deſigns blaſted, he fell into a moſt violent Rage and Fury; and, having reſolved to effect by Cruelty, what he had been diſappointed of doing by Policy, he ſent out his Soldiers, and made a bloody Maſſacre of all the Children in the City of *Bethlehem*, and the neighbouring Towns, that were two Years of Age, and under, including herein the whole Time, and more, that the Wiſemen had told him, and not doubted, but that in this general

neral Slaughter, he ſhould diſpatch the young Prince, whom he ſo much dreaded: But God had provided him with a ſafe Retreat. Theſe Shrieks, however, of tender Mothers for their innocent Babes, and the Groans of expiring Infants, which, on this Occaſion filled the Skies, were inexpreſſible, and were one Reaſon, doubtleſs, why the divine Vengeance, not long after, overtook this Tyrant, and ſmote him with a ſtrange and terrible Diſtemper, which put an End to his wicked and brutal Life.

Before his Death, he had by Will (which in ſome meaſure *Auguſtus* confirmed) ſettled his Dominions upon his Sons, and his Siſter. *Archelaus* he had made his Succeſſor in that Part of his Kingdom which included *Judea*, *Idumea*, and *Samaria*: To *Philip* he had given *Auronitis*, *Trachonitis*, *Panea*, and *Batanea*: To *Herod Antipas*, *Galilee*, and *Paræa*; and to his Siſter *Salome*, ſome particular Cities, with a conſiderable Sum of Money. After his Death therefore, (which was notified to *Joſeph* by a viſion) God ordered him to return, with the Child and his Mother into the Land of *Iſrael*, which *Joſeph* readily obey; but when he arrived in *Judea*, hearing that *Archelaus* ſucceeded *Herod*, in that Part of the Country, and being apprehenſive that the Cruelty and Ambition of the Father might be entailed upon the Son, he feared to ſettle there; and therefore, being directed by God in another Viſion, he retired into the Dominions of his Brother *Herod Antipas*, in *Galilee*, to his former Habitation in *Nazareth*, where the ſtrange Occurrences of our Lord's Birth were not ſo well known. After this, we have no certain Account either of him, or his Parents, only that they annually repaired

with him to *Jeruſalem* at the Paſſover; and that, as his Body increaſed in Stature, ſo, more eſpecially, the Faculties of his Soul were enlarged, being highly repleniſhed with Wiſdom, and the Grace of God.

In the mean Time *Archelaus*, following the Steps of his Father, made himſelf ſo odious to the *Jews*, that the principal Men among them, joining with thoſe of *Samaria*, made a public Complaint of him to *Auguſtus*, who, upon a full Hearing, both of his Crimes and Vindication, deprived him of his Government, confiſcated all his Goods, baniſhed him to *Vienna*, a City in *Gaul*, and reduced his Dominions to the Form of a *Roman* Province, which, for ever after, was ruled by a Governor ſent from *Rome*, who was called by the Name of *Procurator*, but, in ſome Caſes, was ſubject to the Preſident or Governor of *Syria*.

Our Bleſſed Lord, as he was the ſupreme Lawgiver of the World, was not, in Strictneſs, bound to the Obſervation of his own Law, nor did he ſtand in any Need of Circumciſion, conſidered as a Remedy againſt original Sin, becauſe, in his Incarnation, he had contracted no Pollution; but as he was made of a Woman, made under the Law, and came (as himſelf teſtifies, *Mat.* iii. 15.) to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, it became him to receive the Character, which diſtinguiſhed the *Jews* from all other Nations. Among the *Jews* indeed it was thought a reproach to keep Company with Perſons that were not circumciſed. *Thou wenteſt in to Men uncircumciſed, and didſt eat with them*, is the Accuſation which they brought againſt St. *Peter*, *Acts* xi. 3. and therefore, as our Lord was ſent chiefly to the loſt Sheep of *Iſrael*, he could not have

have been qualified for their Acceptance and free Converſation, had he not ſubmitted to this Ordinance. Of him was that moſt glorious of all the Promiſes made to *Abraham*, intended, *In thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed*, Gal. iii. 16. And therefore fit it was, that he ſhould have the Seal or Teſtimony of Circumciſion, in Order to ſhew that he was truly and rightly deſcended of that Anceſtor; and as he was come to be the Mediator of a new and better Covenant. 'Twas but decent, that the former ſhould recide with Honour, and that it might be ſo, he himſelf ſhould approve of a Sacrament, which was both of divine Inſtitution, and a Means of Admiſſion into that former Covenant.

The Law concerning the Purification of Women, we have in the twelfth Chapter of *Leviticus*, wherein it is ordained, that a Woman, after bearing of Children, ſhould continue, for a certain Number of Days, in a State which the Law termed unclean. For the ſeven firſt Days, all Converſation or Contract polluted them that approach her, and for three and thirty Days more (which in all amount to forty) ſhe was ſtill (tho' in an inferior Degree) reputed unclean; but, at the Expiration of this Term, if her Child was a Son (for the Time was double for a Daughter) ſhe was commanded to bring a Burnt-offering, and a Sin-offering, which wiped out the Stain, which the Law had laid upon her, and reſtored her to all the Purity and Privileges ſhe had before. Now tho' the miraculous Conception of the Bleſſed Virgin, ſet her quite above any Obligation to the Law of Impurity, yet ſince her being a Mother was ſufficiently notorious, tho' the Manner of her being ſo, was a Secret, 'twas fit that ſhe ſhould ſubmit, as the known Mother of a Son, to

the Ceremonies expected from her. Her Sin-offering was not indeed due in any Senſe, but ſhe lay under the ſame legal Incapacity, in the Eye of the World, as other Women did, and was to be reſtored to the Temple by it: Her burnt-offering was not due, as that of other Parents is, to commemorate a Deliverance from Pangs and Danger; but never ſure were Thanks ſo juſtly due for any Son, as this, never from any Mother, as from her, who had the Honour to bring forth her own, and the World's Saviour, the Bleſſing and Expectation of all the Earth. As therefore he was circumciſed in his own Perſon, tho' the myſtical and moral Part of Circumciſion had nothing to do with him: So his Mother ſubmitted to all the Purifications, of any other *Iſraelitiſh* Woman, tho' ſhe pertook not in any Degree of the Infirmities and Pollutions common to other Births.

What the Bleſſed Virgin offered, we read, was a Pair of *Turtles*, which being the Oblations appointed only for the meaner Sort of People, *Lev.* xii. 6, 8. diſcovers the Poverty of *Joſeph* and *Mary*, that they could not reach to a Lamb of the firſt Year, the Offering, which they, who had Ability were obliged to make.

Some are of Opinion, that this *Simeon* was the Son and Succeſſor of *Hillel*, a very famous Doctor in the *Jewiſh* Church, before our Saviour's Time, and that he was either the Father or Maſter of *Gamaliel*, at whoſe feet St. *Paul* was educated. But beſides that, we can hardly ſuppoſe, how a Perſon of this Note could make ſo public a Declaration in Favour of our Lord, and yet no more Notice be taken of it; if we look into the ſeveral Revelations, which God, at this Time, was pleaſed to give of

his

his Son, we ſhall find that none of them were directed to any of the *Phariſees*, or principal Doctors of the Law, but that to *Joſeph* a Carpenter, to *Zacharias* an ordinary Prieſt, and to a Company of poor Shepherds, ſuch Diſcoveries were made; and therefore it is much more reaſonable to preſume, that this *Simeon*, to whom God had revealed the Time of Chriſt's Coming, was ſome honeſt plain Man, more remarkable for his Piety and Devotion, than any other Quality or Accompliſhment. When he came into the Temple, 'tis ſaid, that among the other Mothers, who brought their Children to be preſented to the Lord, he obſerved the holy Virgin all ſhining with Rays of Light, and that, putting the Multitude aſide, he went directly to her, gave her his Bleſſing, took the Child *Jeſus* in his Arms, and, being divinely inſpired, pronounced the Canticle, *Nunc dimittis*. *Nicephorus* relates, that, as ſoon as he returned the Child to his Mother, he died; and *Epiphanius* adds, that the *Hebrew* Prieſts refuſed to give him Burial, becauſe he had ſpoken of our Saviour with too much Advantage. But theſe Traditions may be groundleſs Fictions.

When they had performed all Things according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, *to their own City* Nazareth, Chap. ii 39. which muſt be interpreted of ſome Time at leaſt, after they had performed theſe Things. For, upon Suppoſition, that the *Magians* came to *Bethlehem*, after that *Joſeph* and *Mary* had been at *Jeruſalem* with the Child; upon the Child's Return from thence, his Parents muſt have taken *Bethlehem* in their Way, and there made ſome ſmall Stay (in which Time we ſuppoſe that the *Wiſemen* came) before they departed to the

Place

Place of their ſettled Abode: Becauſe the other two Suppoſitions, *viz.* that the *Wiſemen* came to *Bethlehem* before the Preſentation of the Child at *Jeruſalem*, or that they came not till he was in the ſecond Year of his Age, when his Parents, upon ſome Buſineſs or other, happened to be at *Bethlehem*, are attended with more Difficulties than can eaſily be ſurmounted.

Herod, who was naturally of a jealous and ſuſpicious Temper, knew very well, that himſelf was hated by the *Jews*, and that the *Jews* were then in full Expectation of the *Meſſiah* (a Prince, that was to ſubdue all other Nations) to come and reign over them, and had therefore great Reaſon to fear, that this Rumour of a King's being born among them, confirmed by ſuch extraordinary Means, as Perſons coming from a far Country, and conducted to *Jeruſalem* by the Guidance of a wonderful Star, might be a Means to excite Sedition among the People, and occaſion perhaps a Revolution in the Government.

Some, upon this Occaſion, are apt to wonder, why none of the *Jews* ſhould have the Curioſity to attend the *Wiſemen* in their Journey to *Bethlehem*; and the Reaſon, that is commonly aſſigned for their Omiſſion in this Reſpect, is the Dread they might have of offending the Tyrant) under whom they lived: But, as it is highly probable, that, when the *Wiſemen* came to *Jeruſalem*, they made their immediate Application to Court, as the moſt likely Place where to gain Intelligence of him, *that was born King of the* Jews; and as it is much to be queſtioned whether *Herod*, when he convened the Doctors of the Law, made any mention of the *Wiſemen*'s Coming, but nakedly propounded the Queſtion to them, *where Chriſt was to be born?* ſo there

there is great Reaſon to preſume, that he ſent them away ſo privately, that, if any of the *Jews* had been couragious enough to have gone along with them, they poſſibly might not have had an Opportunity. The greater Wonder of the two therefore is, that *Herod* ſhould ſend none, in whom he could confide, to be preſent at the Diſcovery of this rival Prince, and to bring him word thereof, if not diſpatch him: But in this the Protection and Providence of God was viſible.

Some of the Antients are of Opinion, that in the Preſents, which theſe *Eaſtern* Sages made, they had a myſtical Meaning, and deſigned to ſignify their Acknowledgment both of the Divinity, Royalty, and Humanity of our Bleſſed Saviour. For the Incenſe, ſay they, was proper to be given him, as a God; the Gold, as a King; and the Myrrh, as a mortal Man, whoſe Body was to be embalmed therewith. But all this is no more than the Sport of a luxuriant Fancy. 'Tis certain, that the *Eaſtern* People never came into the Preſence of their Princes, without ſome Preſents, and that their Preſents were uſually of the moſt choice Things, that their Country did afford. All that they meant therefore was to do Homage to a new born Prince of a neighbouring Nation, in the beſt Manner they could; and, if what *Naturaliſts* tell us be true, *viz.* that *Myrrh* was only to be found in *Arabia*, and Frankincenſe in *Sabæa*, which is a Part of *Arabia*; that this Country was not deſtitute of Gold, 2 *Chron.* ix. 14. and, at the ſame Time, was famous for Men converſant in Aſtronomy, this makes a very probable Argument, that the *Wiſemen* came from thence. But of this we ſhall ſee more hereafter.

It

It is thought ſtrange by ſome, that *Joſephus*, who writes the Life of *Herod* in moſt of its Circumſtances, ſhould make no manner of Mention of the Murder of theſe Innocents: But, when it is conſidered, that *Joſephus* was only born in the firſt Year of *Caligula*, and the thirty-ſeventh of *Chriſt*; that he wrote his Hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* Wars (which he extracted from publick Records) in the fifty-ſixth Year of his Age; and that it can ſcarce be ſuppoſed, an Action ſo inglorious to the Memory of *Herod*, as this Maſſacre was, ſhould be preſerved in the *Jewiſh* Records; it is not ſo very wonderful, that he, who wrote above ninety-three Years after the Fact was committed, ſhould make no Mention of it; nor is it very material that he did not, ſince we find *Macrobius*, an *Heathen* Author, about the latter End of the fourth Age, not forgetting to acquaint us that *Herod* the King ordered to be ſlain in *Syria* (which in *Roman* Authors, is frequently called *Judæa*) ſome Children that were under two Years old, though he is miſtaken in the Circumſtances of the Story, when he makes *Herod*'s own Son to be one of them.

Some will needs infer from hence, that this dreadful Maſſacre was not committed until our Lord was almoſt two Years old, becauſe they were Children of that Age, and under, whom *Herod* ordered to be ſlain: But, beſides that the *Greek* Word may ſignify one, who has lived one Year only, and ſo the Words may be tranſlated from a Year old, and under; *Herod* might poſſibly think, that the Star did not appear till ſome conſiderable Time after the young King's Birth, and ſo (to make ſure Work) might be induced to ſlay all born at *Bethlehem*, a Year before, and more, even to the Time of the Star's appearing: For he, who had the Heart to

ſlay

Explanation.

Citys Exod. 21. 13. | Citys of the Levites.
as Marked | Common Citys.
Citys | Castles. Villages.

THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Antipatris
Caphar Salamat
Prasis
Cæsarea Palestina
Castle of Strangers
Mount Carmel
Cave of Elias
Galgulis
PALISTINS
Kephar Nacham
Dor
Naphoth
Migdol
Gabe
Saron
Gath Rimmon
Bethanie
Megiddo
The Plains
of Megiddo
Esdraelon
Jokneam
Nahalol
Bethagon
Nazareth
Vale of
Jehtahel
Hallath
Gabara
Zebulun
Besara
Sihor Libnath
Cana of Galilee
Tabor
Nain
Endor
Mount Hermon
Mountains of Ephraim
Hadradrimmon
Ibleam
Jezreel
Zerin
Shunem
Hill of Moreh
Mount Gilboa
Fountain of Jezreel
Mount Tabor
Cast Tabor
Cisamis
Nazareth
Bochim
Jephthah
Capernaum
Bethsaida
Julias
Gergesa
Tiberias
Sea of Galilee
formerly called
Sea of Cinneroth
or
Cinnereth
Capernaum
Gennesaret
Country of the Gadarenes
Gerasa or Gergesena
Magedan
Hippenum
Bethshrimi
Gadara
Amathus
Edrei
Ragaba
Gamala
Golan
Jabes in Galaad
Mahanaim
Penuel
Succoth
Zaphon
Jephtha
Salim
Bethsan
Ænon
Jezreel
Shunem
Hill of Moreh
Nain
Endor
Tabor

EDITERRANEAN SEA

British Miles 60 to a Degree

PHILISTINS
Saron
The Plains of Megiddo
Esdrelon
MANASSE
SAMARIA
ISSACHAR
ZEBULUN
Israel
GALILEE
NAPHTALI
SEA OF GALILEE formerly called SEA OF CINNEROTH or CINNERETH
DECAPOLIS
Land of Asher
Meara Sidon
Land of Milpe
Vale of Alhath
Labanus
Syria Zoba
Cœlo Syria
KINGDOM OF BASAN
KINGDOM OF GALAAD
PEREA
COUNTRY OF THE AMORITES
ARABIA
DESERTA
PHILADEPHIA

THE LAND OF CANAAN
Travel'd over by Our Saviour JESUS CHRIST and by his Apostles

ſlay three of his own Sons, would hardly be ſparing of the Blood of other People's Children.

The Diſeaſe of which *Herod* died, and the Miſery which he ſuffered under it, plainly ſhewed that the Hand of God was then, in a ſignal Manner, upon him. For not long after the Murder of the Infants at *Bethlehem*, his Diſtemper (as *Joſephus* informs us) daily increaſed, after an unheard of Manner, and he himſelf laboured under the moſt loathſome and tormenting Accidents that can be imagined. *He had a lingering and waſting Fever, and grievous Ulcers in his Entrails and Bowels, a violent Cholick, and inſatiable Appetite, a venemous Swelling in his Feet, Convulſions in his Nerves, a perpetual Aſthma and ſtinking Breath, Rottenneſs in his Joints and privy Members, accompanied with prodigious Itchings, crawling Worms and intolerable Smells, ſo that he was a perfect Hoſpital of incurable Diſeaſes.* And thus he died in horrid Pain and Torment, being ſmitten by God for his many enormous Iniquities; for, ſetting aſide ſome Appearances of Generoſity and Greatneſs, there was never a more compleat Tyrant than he. He ſuppreſſed and changed the High-prieſt's Office as he thought fit, and even profaned the Temple itſelf: He ſlew the legal King of the *Jews*, extirpated all the Race of the *Maccabees*, deſtroyed the whole *Sanhedrim*, and ſubſtituted others in their Room. Nor was his Rage confined to the *Jews*, but deſcended to his own Family and neareſt Relations, even to the executing his beloved Wife *Mariamne*, and his own Sons, *Alexander* and *Ariſtobulous*, upon ſlight and trivial Occaſions. So wicked a Prince, as he was conſcious he had been, could not, he knew, occaſion any true Lamentation at his Death, but rather a great deal

of Gladneſs and Rejoycing, all the Kingdom over; and therefore, to prevent this, he framed a Project which was one of the horrideſt that ever entered into the Mind of Man. All the Nobility, and moſt conſiderable Men in every City, Town and Village in *Judea*, upon Pain of Death, he ſummoned to come together to *Jericho*, where he was then lying ſick; and when they were come, commanded his Soldiers to ſhut them all up in a ſpacious Place called the *Hippodrome*; when having called his Siſter *Salome*, and her Husband *Alexas*, with ſome choice Friends, he told them with Tears, *That he was ſenſible of the* Jews *Hatred to his Government and Perſon, and that his Death would be a high Satisfaction to them; that his Friends therefore ought to procure him ſome Solace and Diverſion, in the Midſt of his bitter Anguiſh; which if they performed, according to his Order, the Mournings and Lamentations at his Death, would be as great and magnificent as ever any Prince had: And this Order was, that on the ſame Hour when he expired, the Soldiers ſhould ſurround the* Hippodrome, *and put all the encloſed Perſons to the Sword, and then publiſh his Death, which* (as he ſaid) *would cauſe his Exit to be doubly triumphant*; firſt, *for the poſthumous Execution of his Commands*; *and* ſecondly, *for the Quality and Number of his Mourners.* But *Salome* and *Alexas* not being wicked enough to do what they had been made ſolemnly to promiſe, choſe rather to break their Obligation, than make themſelves the Executioners of ſo bloody a Deſign; and therefore, as ſoon as *Herod* was dead, they opened the *Hippodrome*, and permitted all that were ſhut np in it, to return to their reſpective Homes.

This

This *Antipas* before-mentioned, his Father *Herod* had once appointed to be his Succeſſor, but afterwards expunged him out of his Will, and only made him *Tetrarch*; but not long after his Brother's Acceſſion to the Throne, he went to *Rome* with a Purpoſe to diſpute the Kingdom with him, on Pretence that his Father's former Will, by which he was conſtituted King, ought to take Place before the latter, which was made when his Underſtanding was not ſo perfect. Both the Brothers procured able Orators to ſet forth their Pretenſions before the Emperor, but the Emperor nevertheleſs refuſed to decide any Thing concerning their Affair; nor did he at length give *Archelaus* the Title of a King, but only of an *Ethnarch*, with one Moiety of the Territories which his Father enjoy'd; but theſe, in a few Years after, he, by his ill Conduct, forfeited. Of all the Sons of *Herod*, indeed, this *Archelaus* is ſaid to have been of the moſt fierce and bloody Temper. At his firſt Acceſſion to the Government, under Pretence of a Mutiny, he had killed near three thouſand of his Subjects; and therefore *Joſeph*, hearing of this, might well dread to go and ſettle in any Part of his Dominions; but as *Antipas* was a Man of a more mild Diſpoſition, and the Birth of *Jeſus* not made ſo publick in *Galilee*, and at *Nazareth*, as it was at *Bethlehem*, and even at *Jeruſalem*, by the Coming of the Wiſemen, and what happened at the Purification of the bleſſed Virgin, it was thought more adviſable to retreat into this Village, than to ſet up their Abode in any populous City.

N. B. That the *vulgar Chriſtian Æra*, according to *Dionyſius Exiguus*, which commences four Years after the true Time of *Chriſt*'s Birth, may begin to be computed much about this Time, *viz.*

from the Beginning of the fourth Year of *Archelaus's*, and thirty-firſt of *Auguſtus's* Reign, computing from his Victory over *Anthony* and *Cleopatra.*

Jeſus *increaſed in Wiſdom, and in Stature, and in Favour with God and Man*, Luke ii. 52. but if it be asked, how he, who was the eternal Wiſdom of his Father, could be improved in any Quality of the Mind? The Anſwer is, that all Things in Scripture, which are ſpoken of *Chriſt*, are not ſpoken with reſpect to his intire Perſon, but only with Reſpect to one or other of the Natures, that are united in that Perſon. His Divine Nature was infinite, and conſequently capable of no Improvements, but his Human was: And therefore, though the Divine *Logos* was united to the human Soul, by his Conception, yet might the Divine Nature communicate its Powers to the Human, by diſtinct and gradual Illuminations; and accordingly we may obſerve, that all publick Manifeſtation of it to the World, ſeems to have been induſtriouſly declined, till Ripeneſs of Years and Judgment had carried him up to the Perfections of a Man. So little Reaſon have we to ſuppoſe, that he, who condeſcended to be like us in Body, ſhould think it below him to be ſo too, in that other no leſs eſſential, but much more noble Part of us, our Soul, without which it was impoſſible for him to be Man; ſo little Reaſon to imagine that the Divine Eſſence in him ſupplied the Place and Offices of intellectual Faculties.

When *Paleſtine* was reduced to this State, and our bleſſed Saviour now advanced to the twelfth Year of his Age, according to their annual Cuſtom, he went up with his Parents to *Jeruſalem* at the Time of the *Paſſover*. His Parents, after a Stay

Stay of ſeven Days, having performed the uſual Ceremonies of the Feaſt, were now returning, with great Numbers of their Neighbours and Acquaintance, towards *Galilee*; and never doubting, but that *Jeſus* had joined himſelf with ſome of the Company, they travelled on patiently for a whole Day's Journey; but when Night came on, and among their Relations and particular Friends they could hear no Tydings of him, it is not eaſy to imagine the Greatneſs of their Fears and Apprehenſions, which made them return to *Jeruſalem*, with the utmoſt Speed, to make all poſſible Enquiry for him.

At the End of three Days they found him in one of the Rooms of the Temple, (probably in that of the grand *Sanhedrim*) ſitting among the learned Doctors and Maſters of *Iſrael*, hearing them diſcourſe, and propounding ſuch Queſtions to them, as raiſed the Admiration of all his Auditors, and made them aſtoniſhed at the Ripeneſs of his Underſtanding. Nor were his Parents leſs ſurprized to find him in that Place; but when his Mother told him, with what Impatience they had ſought him, and in ſome Meaſure blamed him for putting them in ſuch a Fright; the Excuſe which he made for himſelf was, *Knew you not that I muſt be employed in my Father's Houſe?* Words, which though ſhe at that Time did not rightly underſtand, ſhe took care, nevertheleſs, for ever after, to regiſter in her Mind!

Being thus happily found by his Parents, he returned with them to *Nazareth*, and there living in all dutiful Subjection to them, wrought, very probably, with his reputed Father, in the Trade of a Carpenter, and after his Father's Death (which is

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed to have happened about a Year before the Preaching of *John the Baptiſt*) he ſtill continued in the ſame Occupation; as, indeed, we can ſcarce help inferring, from the rude Treatment of the *Nazarenes* his Townſmen, as alſo from the total Silence of the *Evangeliſts*, as to the intermediate Actions of his Life, that though he *grew in favour with God and Man*, yet, conſidering his Excellencies, he lived in a very obſcure Manner, and till the Time of his Manifeſtation to *Iſrael*, ſhewed no miraculous Marks to diſtinguiſh him from the reſt of Mankind.

It is commonly obſerved by thoſe that are learned in the Cuſtoms and Inſtitutions of the *Jewiſh* Church, that until a Child was of twelve Years old, he was not obliged to go to *Jeruſalem*, at the Time of the *Paſſover*; and that tho' their Youths were uſually thirteen before they were brought before the Maſters of the *Synagogue*, to give an Account of their Proficiency in Religion (which anſwers, in a great Meaſure, to the Chriſtian Rite of Confirmation) yet, ſince the Seaſon then appointed, was accommodated to the Capacities and Attainments of Children in general, without forbidding thoſe of Qualifications extraordinary, and whoſe Genius (in the *Jewiſh* Phraſe) *did run before the Commandment*, to appear ſooner, our Saviour might offer himſelf, to his Examination, a Year before the common Time; and this is the beſt Reaſon that can be aſſigned for his ſtaying behind his Parents, when he could not but know, that they were departed from *Jeruſalem* without him; and for his being found in one of the Rooms adjoining to the Temple, where the Doctors of the Law uſed to meet, not only to reſolve the Queſ-

tions

tions that were brought before them, but to examine likewiſe and confirm ſuch of the Youth as they found to be qualified for that Ceremony; which, according to the ſame Authors, was uſually performed by devout Prayers and ſolemn Benedictions.

It may ſeem a little ſtrange, perhaps, that *Mary* and *Joſeph*, who had been ſufficiently inſtructed, one would think, in the great Article of *Chriſt*'s Divinity, and therefore muſt certainly know, that as *he was the Power and Wiſdom of God*, he could neither fall into any Danger, nor come to any Harm, ſhould ſo mightily afflict themſelves, when they came to miſs him. The Reaſon which *Origen* ſeems to aſſign, is not that his Parents ſuppoſed that he was loſt, or come to any Miſchance, but were apprehenſive that he had withdrawn himſelf to ſome other Place, and was poſſibly gone up to Heaven, there to continue until his eternal Father ſhould think proper to ſend him down again: But the moſt eaſy and natural Solution is, that without ever conſidering what they had ſufficient Reaſon to believe concerning his Divinity and Omnipotence, they ſuffered themſelves to be carried away by their natural Tenderneſs, and could not, without great Concern, ſee themſelves deprived of his Company, uncertain of what had befallen him, for or what poſſible Reaſon he ſhould abſent himſelf from theirs. It muſt not be denied, however, that tho' ſomething may be allowed to a Parent's Fondneſs, yet it does not appear from their whole Conduct, and eſpecially from *Mary*'s Complaint, and our Saviour's Reply, that they had, as yet, a clear and perfect Knowledge of his divine Nature in Union with the Human, and therefore the

the *Evangeliſt* has remarked upon them, *That they underſtood not the Saying which he ſpake unto them.*

From the Words in the Text, *After three Days they found him*; we need not thence infer, that they were three Days ſeeking him, but rather, that it was three Days from the Time they ſet out from *Jeruſalem*; going on their Journey the firſt Day; returning to *Jeruſalem* the ſecond; and finding him in the Temple on the third: For ſince they found him in the Temple, which, in all Probability, was the firſt Place they ſought for him in, we can hardly imagine that they ſhould be three Days in *Jeruſalem* before they found him.

It may poſſibly be made a Queſtion, why the *Evangeliſts* have given us no Account of our Saviour's Life, from the twelfth Year of his Age, till he began his Miniſtry, which according to the vulgar *Æra*, was about the thirtieth; becauſe if in this intermediate Space, he did any Thing worthy of Remembrance, it ought, in all Reaſon, to have been recorded. But when it is conſidered, that the End of the ſacred Penman was not ſo much to gratify our Curioſity, as to conſult our Profit, we cannot but admire the great Wiſdom of God (by whoſe Inſpiration they wrote) in paſſing by the leſs active Parts of our Lord's Life, which would certainly have ſwelled their Goſpels to immenſurable Volumes, fit for the Peruſal of none but the Studious, and ſuch as had Plenty of Time at their Command; whereas now, taking the four Goſpels, together, they make but a ſmall Book, and ſeparately, no more than little Manuals that may be carried about us where-ever we go, may be ſoon read over, and eaſily remembred, even by Men of mean Capacities, and no great Leiſure; and

Pilate wrote this Inscription and prefixed it to the Cross on which Christ *was crucified* JESUS OF NAZARETH KING OF

and yet they contain all the Tranſactions of our Saviour's Life, which chiefly concerns us to know; I mean, ſuch as relate to his mediatorial Office, as that he came into the World to teach us; to die, and to riſe again for us; to inſtruct us by his heavenly Doctrine, as our Prophet; to offer himſelf a Sacrifice on the Croſs, as our Prieſt; and to looſe the Bands of Death, and aſcend triumphant into Heaven, as our King. *For there are alſo many other Things*, ſays the Evangeliſt, *that* Jeſus *did, which are not written in this Book, but theſe are written, that ye might believe that* Jeſus *is the* Chriſt, *the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name*, John xxi. 25. and xx. 31.

In the eighteenth Year of our Saviour's Life, died *Auguſtus Cæſar*, at *Nola* in *Campania*, after a Reign of near forty-four Years, to the inexpreſſible Grief of all his Subjects, and was ſucceeded by *Tiberius*, the Son of his Wife *Livia*, by a former Husband, but a Prince of a quite contrary Diſpoſition to his Predeceſſor. In the ſecond Year of his Acceſſion to the Empire, he recalled *Rufus* from the Government of *Judea*, and ſent *Valerius Gratus* (who was the fourth Governor in theſe Parts, ſince the Baniſhment of *Archelaus*) to ſucceed him. *Gratus* having continued in *Judea* about eleven Years, was at length recalled, and *Pontius Pilate* (a Perſon too like his Maſter *Tiberius*, of a fierce and irreconcileable Spirit, and of a cruel and covetous Diſpoſition) was ſent Governor in his Place; in the firſt Year of whoſe Coming (which was the fifteenth Year of *Tiberius*, from the Time that he was admitted to reign in Copartnerſhip with *Auguſtus*) *John the Baptiſt* began to open his Commiſſion for

the Preparation of our Saviour's Way before him, by preaching *the Baptiſm of Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sins.*

He had been bred up in the *Wilderneſs*, and lived an auſtere Life on Locuſts and Wild-honey, ſuch as Nature produced in theſe deſart Places, was the chief Diet he lived upon, and a looſe Coat made of Camels Hair, and faſtened with a Leathern Girdle, the only Garb he wore; and therefore no Perſon was ſo proper to inculcate the Doctrines of Repentance and Reformation, as he, who by his free and reſolute Preaching, joined with this great Severity of Life, ſoon procured a vaſt Auditory, and numerous Proſelytes of all Ranks and Qualities, from *Jeruſalem* and all *Judea*, and all the Region about *Jordan*, confeſſing their Sins before God, and entering into this new Inſtitution by Baptiſm.

Among the great Multitudes that came to his Preaching and Baptiſm, there were *Phariſees*, and *Sadducees* not a few, whoſe Confidence and Immorality he ſharply reproved, while at the ſame Time he exhorted the common People to Works of extenſive Charity; the *Publicans*, to avoid Oppreſſion and Injuſtice; the Soldiers to abſtain from Plunder and Violence; and every one, in ſhort, to beware of thoſe Crimes to which their Employments and Manner of Life did moſt expoſe them.

Theſe ſolemn Admonitions, attended with ſo much Innocence and Authority, procured him a mighty Veneration among the People; inſomuch that ſeveral began to look upon him as the promiſed, and now expected *Meſſiah*: But, to remove all Thoughts of this Kind, he freely declared, that he only baptized them with *Water*, to Repentance and

and a new Life; but that there was one coming, and ready to appear among them, who would baptize them with the Effuſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and who ſo far exceeded him in Power and Excellency, that he was not worthy to do for him the meaneſt or moſt ſervile Office. Theſe were the Doctrines which *John* preached, and this the Teſtimony which he gave of *Jeſus*, even before he had the Happineſs to know him.

After *John* had continued in his Miniſtry for ſeveral Months, our Lord thought proper to remove from his private Retirement, at *Nazareth*, and taking Leave of his Mother and his Trade, paſſed over into *Judea*, to *Bethabara*, on the Banks of the River *Jordan*, where *John* was then baptizing.

He, who was Innocence and Purity itſelf, had certainly no Need of the Baptiſm of Repentance, but being minded to honour and ſanctify the Inſtitution, he offered himſelf to *John*; and when *John*, inſpired with a prophetic Spirit, knew him, and thereupon endeavoured to decline the Office, he gave him ſuch Reaſons for the Expediency of the Thing, as made him no longer heſitate, but immediately baptize him. *Jeſus* was no ſooner got out of the Water, but as he was making his Addreſſes to Heaven, the Sky on a Sudden was divided by a great Radiency, and the Holy Ghoſt, in the Manner of a Dove, deſcending upon his ſacred Head, with an audible Voice from Heaven, wherein God declared him his *beloved Son, in whom he was well pleaſed.*

Joſephus has given us ſeveral Inſtances of *Pilate*'s great Cruelty in the Courſe of his Government, *viz.* that he cauſed the *Roman* Soldiers to fall upon

a great Number of *Galileans* (very likely the Followers of *Judas Gaulonites*) and to ſlaughter them like ſo many Sheep, in the Temple, and on the very Day apyointed for the killing of the Paſſover, and ſo *mingled their Blood with their Sacrifices*, *Luke* xiii. 1. That when the People clamoured againſt his taking ſome of the ſacred Money out of the Temple, he ordered the Soldiers, upon a Signal given, to fall upon them with large Battoons, ſo that many died of the Blows which they received, and many were trodden to death in the Throng: And that the *Samaritans*, as well as the *Jews*, felt the Severity of his Adminiſtration, when he deſtroyed great Numbers of them near *Tirathaba*; and of thoſe whom he took, that were of any Intereſt or Quality among them, ſtruck off their Heads.

How *John* paſſed the former Part of his Life, the Scripture is ſilent; but there is an antient Tradition in the Church, that *Elizabeth*, hearing of the ſad Havock which *Herod*'s Barbarity had made among the Infants in *Bethlehem*, fled into the Wilderneſs, to ſecure her Child from the Tyrant's Rage, and there attended him with all the Care and Tenderneſs of an affectionate Mother: That the Child was about eighteen Months old, when his Mother thus fled with him, but after forty Days ſhe died, and his Father *Zacharias*, at the next Time of his Adminiſtration, was, by the Command of *Herod* (becauſe he would not diſcover the Place of his Son's Concealment) put to Death: That in this Deſtitution of natural Parents, God ſent an Angel to be his Nouriſher and Guardian (as he had formerly done to *Elijah*, when he fled from the Rage of *Ahab*) until he came of Strength

Strength to provide for himſelf, and that then he lived in the Manner that the *Evangeliſts* have deſcribed. When he began his Preaching it is not ſo well agreed. *Lightfoot*, and ſome others, who believe that our Saviour was born in *September*, and that *John* was now beginning to be thirty Years of Age, are of Opinion that he began his Miniſtry about the Paſſover; but *Uſher* and his Followers, do with more probability ſuppoſe, that his Preaching began upon the tenth Day of the ſeventh Month (which anſwers to our nineteenth Day of *October*) five Days before the Feaſt of *Tabernacles*, upon the great Day of *Expiation*, when the High-prieſt entered the *Holy of Holies*, and when ſo ſolemn a Faſt was injoined, that whoſoever did not afflict his Soul at that Time, was to be cut off from the People.

The Meaning of the Phraſe is, that *John* preached Repentance, *Matt.* iii. 2. and baptized thoſe that were penitent, in Token of the Remiſſion of their Sins, even as they, on their Parts received Baptiſm, in Teſtimony of the Sincerity of their Repentance. Now Baptiſm, we know, was no new or ſtrange Thing among the *Jews*. It was acknowledged and practiſed, as an Emblem of *Purification* from paſt Guilt, and a Rite of entering ſolemnly into Covenant with God. The Expoſitors of their Law agree, that this Ceremony paſſed upon the whole Congregation of *Iſrael*, juſt before the Law was given at Mount *Sinai*; and their Cuſtom, in all ſucceeding Ages, has been to receive their heathen Proſelytes by Baptiſm as well as by Sacrifices and Circumciſion. In Conformity to this therefore, *John* both adminiſtered and exhorted his Followers to his Ordinance of Baptiſm,

Baptiſm, as an Evidence of their Penitence for paſt Sins, and Profeſſion of better Obedience for the Future: But then as Faith is a Qualification for Baptiſm, as well as Repentance, he propounded our Lord, for the Object of Faith to all who received this Ordinance at his Hands: *For* John *verily baptized with the Baptiſm of Repentance, ſaying unto the People, that they ſhould believe in him, who ſhould come after him*, i. e. *on* Chriſt Jeſus, Acts xix. 4. It is a great Miſtake therefore, in ſome, to ſuppoſe that the Baptiſm of *John*, was, in ſubſtance, the ſame with what *Chriſt* did afterwards inſtitute: For *John* neither did, nor could baptize his Diſciples in the *Name of the Holy Ghoſt*, as the Apoſtles did, becauſe the *Holy Ghoſt was not yet given*, John vii. 39. he did not baptize them in the Name of *Chriſt*; for had he done ſo, there had been no Occaſion for the Queſtion, *Whether he himſelf were the Chriſt*, or not? *Luke* iii. 15. Here therefore lay the Imperfection of *John*'s Baptiſm, that tho' it prepared Men to be Chriſtians, yet it did not make them ſo; and therefore we find St. *Paul* baptizing again ſome Diſciples at *Epheſus* (who had before received the Baptiſm of *John*) in order to fit them for the Reception of the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* xix. 5, 6.

A Wilderneſs, among the *Jews*, did not ſignify a Place wholly void of Inhabitants, but a Place that was more mountainous, leſs fruitful, leſs peopled, and where the Habitations were more diſperſed, than in other Parts of the Country; and the Wilderneſs of *Judea*, where *John* preached and baptized, lay on each Side of the River *Jordan*, on the Confines of *Enon* and *Salim*.

There is no Reaſon for running into Criticiſms, what

what the common Diet of the *Baptiſt* was, whether Fowl or Fiſh, or Herbs or wild Peaſe, (for the *Greek* Word has been made to ſignify all theſe) ſince the Thing is notorious, that Locuſts (in the moſt obvious Senſe of the Word) were Creatures which the *Levitical* Law looked upon as clean, and allowed the *Jews* to eat, *Levit.* xi. 22. that they were a common Food, as the Antients affirm, in *Afric*, *Perſia*, *Syria*, and even *Paleſtine* itſelf; that, according to the Account of ſome modern Authors, in ſome Places they are brought in Waggon-loads, and ſold in the Market for the common People to feed on; and that they are frequently ſeen upon the Banks of the River *Jordan*, of the ſame Form, but much larger than ours; and being either fried in Oil, or dried in the Sun, are accounted a good Sort of Food. As little Reaſon is there for Men to puzzle themſelves about what this wild Honey means, ſince every one knows that *Judea* was ſo famed for plenty of Honey, that, in ſeveral Places of Scripture, it is ſaid to flow with Honey; and from the Inſtances of *Sampſon*, *Judg.* xiv. 8. and *Jonathan*, 2 *Sam.* xix. 25. it muſt be concluded, that wild Honey, ſuch as either diſtilled from the Boughs like Dew, or was found in the Cliffs of Rocks, or hollow Trunks of Trees, was no uncommon Thing in that Country. But tho' theſe Locuſts and wild Honey, may very properly be taken in their natural and moſt obvious Senſe, yet it muſt not therefore be thought that *John* never eat any Thing elſe, but that, for the Generality, he made uſe of ſuch ſlender Diet, and contented himſelf with what the deſart Place, which he choſe for his Habitation, could afford him.

We are told, by ſome Authors, that the Hair of

of Camels about the *Caſpian Sea*, was formerly the ſofteſt in the World, of which was made a very fine Stuff; and that, in the Empire of the great *Cham* of *Tartary*, in the City of *Calacia*, the Metropolis of the Province of *Tangouth*, there is a Kind of Cloth, which the Inhabitants call *Zambelotte* (the ſame, no doubt, with what we call *Camelot*) made of Wool and Camels-Hair, perfectly good, and as fine as any Cloth whatever. But there is Reaſon good to think, that *John*'s Habit was far from being of this Kind, becauſe it would not ſo well ſuit with the Condition of a Man living in a Wilderneſs, to whom our Saviour oppoſes thoſe that are cloathed in ſoft Raiment; would not ſo well agree with the Evangeliſt's Deſign of ſetting forth the *Baptiſt*'s Auſterity in his Habit, as well as Diet; nor comport ſo well with the Deſcription of *Elias*, whom he came to repreſent, *an hairy Man, and one girt with a Girdle of Leather about his Lions*, 2 Kings i. 8. Tho' therefore we may not infer from the Expreſſion, that the *Baptiſt*'s Habit was merely Sackcloth, (as ſome would have it) yet we cannot but conclude from thence, that it was plain and coarſe, ſuch as became the Place where he lived (where Camels, we are told, were in great Plenty) and a Prophet and Preacher of Righteouſneſs to wear.

It would be too great a Digreſſion from our Purpoſe to give a particular Account of the Riſe and Principles of the ſeveral Sects among the *Jews*, and therefore ſhall only obſerve, that the *Phariſees* are thought to take their Name from the *Word* Paraſh, which ſignifies *Separation*, becauſe they were ſeparated from all others in their extraordinary Pretences to Sanctity, and ſome particular Obſervances; and that the *Sad-*

ducees,

ducees, (who were directly oppoſite to the *Phariſees*, both in Temper and Principles) derived their Name, either from *Sadoc*, who lived near three hundred Years before our Saviour's Birth, and is ſuppoſed to be the Founder of the Sect, or (as ſome think) from *Sedec*, which ſignifies Juſtice, becauſe they pretended to be the only exact Diſtributors of Juſtice, and were very rigid, indeed, in the Execution of it.

The Publicans were Perſons of no particular Sect, nor of any religious Function among the *Jews*, but certain public Officers, whom the *Romans* employ'd to collect their Tributes, Tolls and Impoſts. This Office was once of great Account among the *Romans*, and conferred upon none leſs than the *Equeſtrian* Order; but when it came to fall into the Hands of the *Jews*, who farmed it of the *Romans*, it ſoon became baſe and infamous, and more eſpecially odious to the *Jews*, upon theſe two Accounts: 1ſt, Becauſe theſe Tributes were looked upon as a ſtanding Inſtance of their Slavery, which they, who made ſuch Boaſts of their being a free-born People, and inveſted with that Privilege by God himſelf, could leaſt of all endure. And 2dly, Becauſe theſe *Publicans* having farmed the Cuſtoms, of the *Romans*, at high Rates, did generally make uſe of all Methods of Extortion and Oppreſſion, to enable them both to pay their Rents, and to make ſome Advantage to themſelves. Upon theſe Accounts, the *Publicans*, as conſpiring with the *Romans*, both to impoveriſh and enſlave their Countrymen, became ſo univerſally abhorred by the *Jewiſh* Nation, that they held it unlawful to do them any Act of common Courteſy, nay, even to eat or to drink with them, for which we find them ſo frequently blaming our Saviour.

Bethabara, in the *Hebrew* Language, ſignifies as much *as a Place of Paſſage*; and therefore, whereas we read, *Joſh.* ii. 7, 23. that there was a fording Place over *Jordan*, not far from *Jericho*; and again, *Joſh.* iii. 16. that the People paſſed over right againſt *Jericho*, it is probably conjectured, that hereabouts ſtood *Bethabara*, and was the Place of Reception and Entertainment for Paſſengers out of *Judea* in *Perea*, or the Country beyond *Jordan*; nay, it is imagined by ſome, that in the very ſame Place of the River where the Ark ſtood, while the *Iſraelites* paſſed over, our bleſſed Saviour, the Ark of the Covenant of Grace, was baptized by *John the Baptiſt*.

There are ſome other Reaſons which might induce our Lord to come to *John*'s Baptiſm, beſides what himſelf alledges, *viz. the Perfor[illegible]nce of all Righteouſneſs*, or whatever had a Tendency in the People's Edification; as that he might authorize this Baptiſm of *John*, by his public Approbation; that by this Rite he might be initiated to his prophetic Office, and conſecrated to the Service of God; that hereby he might aboliſh the Ceremony of the *Jewiſh* Baptiſm, and more effectually recommend that of his own Inſtitution, to which this of the *Baptiſt* was an Introduction; and more eſpecially, that in the Preſence of the *Baptiſt*, and all the Company that had reſorted to him, he might obtain the Teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt, and his heavenly Father to confirm *John* in the Belief of his being the promiſed *Meſſiah*, and to induce the People, as ſoon as he began his Miniſtry, to follow and attend him.

The Words in the Text are theſe, *Then cometh* Jeſus *from* Galilee *to* Jordan, *unto* John, *to be baptized*

tized of him, but John *forbad him.* Luke iii. 13, 1. but how could *John* forbid him, when he ſays of himſelf, *I knew him not, but he that ſent me to baptize with Water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he who baptizeth with the* Holy Ghoſt, *John* i. 33. Now to this it may be anſwered, that ſince one Part of *John*'s Miniſtry was *to bear witneſs of that Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World,* it was highly neceſſary, that our Saviour ſhould be unknown to him in Perſon, before he came to his Baptiſm, that the World might have no Suſpicion of any Colluſion, or that the *Baptiſt* teſtified of him by Compact. Tho' notwithſtanding he had never ſeen the Face of our Saviour, becauſe they were bred up in different Countries, yet by a particular Revelation, he knew that he was already come into the World, and was ſhortly to baptize with the *Holy Ghoſt*; and therefore when our Saviour came, and preſented himſelf to be baptized, he had immediately another Revelation, that this was the great Perſon, of whom he had been told before; even as *Samuel,* having been told by God, that *on the Morrow, a Man ſhould come to him to be the Captain over his People* Iſrael, 1 *Sam.* ix. 15. upon *Saul*'s appearing, had another Inſpiration, reſembling the *Baptiſt*'s here. *Behold the Man of whom I ſpake to thee,* Ver. 17.

The Obſervation of the *Greek* Church, in Relation to our Saviour's Baptiſm, is this, that he who aſcended out of the Water, muſt firſt deſcend down into it; and conſequently, *that Baptiſm is to be performed, not by ſprinkling, but by waſhing the Body.* And indeed he muſt be ſtrangely ignorant

of the *Jewiſh* Rites of Baptiſm, who ſeems to doubt of this, ſince, to the due Performance of it, they required the Immerſion of the whole Body, to ſuch a Degree of Nicety, that if any Dirt was upon it, that hindered the Water from coming to that Part, they thought the Ceremony not rightly done. The Chriſtians, no doubt, took this Rite from the *Jews*, and followed them in their Manner of performing it. Accordingly, ſeveral Authors have ſhewn, that we read no were in Scripture of any one's being baptized, but by Immerſion, and from the Acts of Councils; and antient Rituals, have proved, that this Manner of Immerſion continued (as much as poſſible) to be uſed, for thirteen hundred Years after *Chriſt*. But it is much to be queſtioned, whether the Prevalence of Cuſtom, and the over Fondneſs of Parents, will, ever ſuffer it to be reſtored, eſpecially in theſe cold Countries.

The Words in St. *Matthew*, —— *Lo the Heavens were open*, in St. *Mark*, *cloven* or *rent*. The common People of the *Jews*, indeed, were of Opinion, that the Heavens were firm and ſolid, and that the Fire, which fell from thence upon the Face of the Earth, burſt through this Firmament, and made an Opening in this vaſt Convex, that ſurrounds us: And therefore it is that the *Evangeliſts* expreſs themſelves in this Manner, in Accommodation to Prejudices and Capacities of the Vulgar. But by the Phraſe we need underſtand no more, than that a ſudden Beam of radiant Light came darting from the Skies, (like a Flaſh of Lightning from the Clouds) and made it ſeem as tho' the Heavens had been opened, or rent, to let it out; becauſe, to the naked Eye, the Air, at that

that Time ſeems to divide to make a clearer and fuller Way for the Light.

The Antients were generally of Opinion, that the *Holy Ghoſt*, in his Deſcent upon our Saviour, aſſumed the real Shape of a Dove, which, at that Time, more eſpecially, was a very proper Repreſentation of his Dove-like Nature, *Iſaiah* xlii. 2. and of all ſuch as were to receive the ſame Spirit, and are required to be as harmleſs as Doves; but moſt of the Moderns (tho' they allow that the bleſſed Spirit did, at this Time, aſſume a viſible Shape, to render his Deſcent manifeſt) do maintain that the *Greek* Words relates not to the Body or Shape of a Dove, but to the Manner of a Dove's deſcending, and lighting on any Thing. Whether of theſe Opinions ſhould prevail, it is idle to diſpute, ſince neither of them are deſtitute of ſome Countenance from Scripture, neither of them injurious to the Dignity of the Holy Ghoſt.

Our Bleſſed Lord, being thus by Baptiſm and the Unction of the Holy Ghoſt, prepared for his prophetic Office, was, by the Impulſe of the divine Spirit, carried farther into the Wilderneſs of *Judea*, where, after he had faſted forty Days and forty Nights, (as *Moſes* did on Mount *Sinai*) and was now very hungry, the Devil aſſumed a bodily Shape, and ſet upon him with a threefold Temptation. Firſt, from his Hunger he took Occaſion to tempt him to deſpair and diſtruſt of his Father's Care of him, who had abandoned him in that Condition, and therefore perſuading him that he was not the Son of God, he put him upon the Experiment of his being ſuch, by making the Stones become Bread: But our Saviour ſoon

anſwered

anſwered him by a Paſſage out of the Scripture, intimating, that God, when he pleaſed, could employ Means extraordinary for the Support and Nouriſhment of Men. Secondly, His next Eſſay was to try how far Pride and Preſumption would affect him; and therefore carrying him through the Air, and ſetting him upon the higheſt Part of the Temple, he put him upon the Proof of his being the Son of God, by throwing himſelf off from thence, and flying in the Air, alledging a Text out of the *Pſalmiſt*, to encourage him: But *Jeſus* as ſoon anſwered him by another Text, commanding Men not to tempt God, or depend upon his Providence for their Conſervation, in Dangers of their own ſeeking. Thirdly, His laſt Experiment was, to tempt him with the Charms of Ambition; and therefore, tranſporting him again thro' the Air, to the Top of an exceeding high Mountain, he there, by an angelical Power, made a lively Repreſentation to him, of all the Kingdoms of the World, with all their dazzling Glories, at one View, and then told him, that theſe, with all their Pomp and Splendor, were delivered to his Diſpoſal, and ſhould be given to him, if he would but acknowledge his Benefactor and worſhip him: But this was boldneſs and Blaſphemy, ſuch as provoked our Lord to exert his divine Power, and to command him peremptorily to be gone, but with this *Memento* out of Scripture likewiſe, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve:* Whereupon the Devil left him for that Time, and Angels, ſent from Heaven, came with Refreſhments for him, after his triumphant Combat.

During our Saviour's Temptation in the Deſert, his

his faithful Fore-runner, *John the Baptiſt*, being thus aſſured, both by the Deſcent of the Spirit, and the Voice from Heaven, that *Jeſus* was the true and long-expected *Meſſiah*, he made full and open Declarations of it to all the Multitude that came to hear him; and when the grand *Sanhedrim* at *Jeruſalem* had ſent a Deputation of their Prieſts and *Levites*; (who were of the Sect of the *Phariſees*) to demand of him, *Who he was?* He very readily acknowledged, that he was not the *Meſſiah* whom they expected, nor *Elias*, who, as they imagined, would perſonally appear among them, nor any other Prophet riſen from the Dead; but then he gave them to underſtand, that though he was not *Elias* himſelf, yet he was that Prophet, whom *Iſaiah* intended, when he called him, *the Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, make ſtrait the Way of the Lord*; that his Baptiſm was only of Water, but the Efficacy of it depended upon one among them, whom they knew not, one, who ſucceeded him, indeed, in Time, but ſo far ſurpaſſed him in Dignity, that he was not worthy ſo much as to be his Servant.

The very next Day after the Departure of the *Phariſees*, as our Saviour was returning from the Wilderneſs to *Bethabara*, *John* pointed him out to the Multitude, as *the immaculate Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of Mankind*, and then freely declared, that he was the very Perſon of whoſe Superiority, both in Dignity and Exiſtence he had ſpoken, and of whom, by certain Tokens he knew, and *could bear record that he was the Son of God.*

To two of his own Diſciples, the next Day, he gave the ſame Teſtimony, inſomuch that they left

their old Maſter, and followed *Jeſus*; and when *Andrew*, (who was one of them) went and diſcovered the ſame Thing to his elder Brother *Simon*, he too became one of his Diſciples, to whom, the Day following, were adjoined *Philip*, an Inhabitant of the City *Bethſaida*, and an intimate Friend of his, named *Nathanael*, of *Cana* in *Galilee*, ſuppoſed to be the ſame with the Apoſtle *Bartholomew*.

This *Nathanael*, at his very firſt coming, upon our Saviour's giving ſome Tokens of his Omniſcience, made a liberal Confeſſion of his being the *Meſſiah*, the *Son of God*; whereupon our Saviour aſſured him, that in a ſhort Time, he ſhould have a fuller Conviction of his Divinity, when he ſhould ſee the Angels of Heaven aſcending and deſcending, (as they did once in the Viſion to *Jacob*) attend the Perſon and execute the Orders of the *Son of Man*.

With theſe five Diſciples, *Jeſus* and his Mother were invited, next Day, to a Marriage-feaſt in *Cana*, a ſmall Place in *Galilee*, not far from *Nazareth*. At this Solemnity there happened to be a Scarcity of Wine, which when his Mother underſtood, ſhe made her Application to him, in hopes that by ſome Means or other he would not fail to ſupply the Defect. In other Inſtances, no doubt, ſhe had been made ſenſible of his ſupernatural Power; and therefore (though his Anſwer ſeems to carry in it the Appearance of a Denial) ſhe ſtill expected ſomething extraordinary from him, and therefore ordered the Waiters to obey his Commands with the utmoſt Exactneſs.

The Cuſtom of the *Jews*, in all their Entertainments, was to uſe frequent Waſhings; and, for this Purpoſe, there were, in a certain private Room

Room, ſix Water-ciſterns, containing each about twenty Gallions of our Meaſure. Theſe our Saviour commanded the Servants to fill up to the Brim, and when they had ſo done, to carry the Liquor to the Governor of the Feaſt, for him to diſtribute to the reſt of the Company, as the Manner then was. But when the Governor had taſted it, he was not a little ſurprized; and calling to the Bridegroom, told him, with a pleaſant Air, *That at moſt Entertainments like this, it was an uſual Thing for People to bring out their beſt Wine at firſt, and worſe when the Gueſts had drank plentifully, but that he, contrary to the common Cuſtom, had reſerved his beſt to the latter End of the Feaſt.*

This was the firſt Miracle our Saviour did in any public Manner, which proved both a Manifeſtation of his own Divinity, and a Confirmation of his own Diſciples Faith. From *Cana* he went down to *Capernaum*, the Place where he uſually afterwards reſided; but his Stay at this Time was not long there, becauſe his Purpoſe was to go to *Jeruſalem* at the approaching Feaſt of the *Paſſover*.

Whoever conſiders the Weakneſs of human Nature, cannot but allow, that ſo great and ſo long an Abſtinence, without any Senſe of Hunger (for the *Evangeliſts* tells us, that our Saviour was only hungry afterwards) muſt be altogether miraculous, and ſo no Duty to us; and if he reflects withal, that the End of his Faſt was not to chaſtize or ſubdue that Body, which was never irregular, (as the Deſign of all our Faſting is) he muſt allow, that our Saviour, in this Particular, ſet no Precedent to us, and therefore it is Cruelty, or a ſuperſtitious

perſtitious Folly at leaſt, in a Matter ſo ſupernatural, to enjoin Men to follow his Steps.

The Word Devil, which anſwers exactly with the *Hebrew Satan*, ſignifies a *Calumniator* or *Accuſer*; and, as it occurs in Scripture, always in the ſingular Number, is ſuppoſed to denote that evil Spirit who tempted our firſt Parents, the Chief of the Rebel-Angels, and the avowed Enemy of the Saints.

According to the Deſcription that *Joſephus* gives us of the Temple which *Herod* built, we hear of no Pinnacles or lofty Turrets above the reſt of the Building; and therefore have Reaſon to think, that the *Greek* which is rendered *Pinnacle*, ſhould rather ſignify the Battlement, or that Parapet-wall which was carried round the Top of the Temple, (as well as private Houſes, *Deut.* xxii. 8.) to keep Men from falling from the Roof. And if we may be allowed to conjecture on what Part of the Battlement it was, that the Devil placed our Saviour, it ſeems very likely that it was on the Top of that Gallery, whoſe Building (according to the ſame Author) was ſo prodigious high, and the Valley underneath it ſo ſtupendiouſly deep, that it turned ones Eyes and Head to look from the Top to the Bottom of it, and was, indeed, one of the moſt confounding Spectacles under the Sun.

The beſt Account that we have, both of the Wilderneſs and nigh Mountain, where our Lord was tempted, is in the Travels of Mr. *Maundrel*, (for the Antients tells us very little of them) who informs us, ——That, in his Journey from *Jeruſalem* to *Jordan*, after he paſſed over Mount *Olivet*, he proceeded in an intricate Way, among Hills

and

and Valleys interchangeably; and after ſome Hours travel in this ſort of Road, arrived at the mountainous Deſert, into which our bleſſed Saviour was led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the Devil; *A miſerable dry Place*, ſays he, *it is, conſiſting of high rocky Mountains, ſo torn and diſordered, as if the Earth had here ſuffered ſome great Convulſion, in which its very Bowels had been turned outward. From the Top of theſe Hills of Deſolation, we had, however, a delightful Proſpect of* Arabia, *the* Dead-Sea, *and the Plains of* Jericho, *into which laſt we deſcended, after about five Hours March from* Jeruſalem. *As ſoon as we entered the Plain, we turned upon the left Hand, and going about one Hour that Way, came to the Foot of the* Quarantania, *(ſo called from our Lord's forty Days Faſt) which, they ſay, is the Mountain where the Devil tempted him with the viſionary Scene of all the Kingdoms and Glories of the World. It is very high and ſteep, and its Aſcent not only difficult, but dangerous.* This is the Account which our Country Man gives us of the Place where our Saviour was probably tempted: But it is not ſuppoſable that even from the higheſt Mountain in the World, the Devil could ſhew all the Kingdoms of it. and therefore the moſt rational Account of this Matter, is that, *as he was the Prince of the Power of the Air, he formed an airy Horizon* (as Dr. *Lightfoot* expreſſes it) *before the Eyes of* Chriſt, *which might carry ſuch a pompous and glorious Appearance of Kingdoms, States and Royalties, in the Face of it, as if he had ſeen thoſe very Kingdoms and States in Reality.* God, we are told, cauſed *Moſes* to ſee the whole *Land of Promiſe* from the Top of *Nebo*, (as it is generally thought) by repreſenting it to him in a large Plan or Map of it, in all the Valleys round about

him; and in like Manner (by the divine Permiſſion) in all Valleys round about the high Mountain, on which our Lord ſtood, the *Devil* might make a large Draught of the ſtately Edifices, the Guards and Attendants of Kings and Princes, appearing in their Splendor, viſible to the Eye, which he could not have ſeen ſo advangeouſly, had he ſtood on a plain.

The *Sanhedrim* thought proper, out of their Body, to depute ſuch as were of the Sect of the *Phariſees*, becauſe, as they were Perſons who believed the Immortality of the Soul, and the Reſurrection of the Body; they were better qualified than the *Sadducees*, who believed neither, to enquire of *John*, whether he was *Elias?* being, in this Particular, mere *Pythagoreans*, and fancying that the Soul of one great Man might frequently paſs into another's Body; and as they were the Patrons of Tradition, and exact in all the ordinary Rules and Cuſtoms, that were to be obſerved, they were the properer Perſons to examine into this new Rite of Baptiſm, by way of Preparation for the *Meſſiah*, of which their Traditions were wholly ſilent, and therefore they ask him, *why baptizeſt thou?* i. e. *Why uſurpeſt thou an Authority which belongs to none, but either to the* Meſſiah, Elias, *or ſome other Prophet; by initiating us, who are already under the Covenant, into a new Doctrine by Baptiſm, which is uſually adminiſtered to none, but heathen Proſelytes?* And from hence it appears, that the *Phariſees* were the propereſt Men to ſend to the *Baptiſt* upon this Meſſage.

It was a received Tradition among the *Jews*, that at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, ſeveral of the antient Prophets would ariſe from the Dead.

It is the Opinion of ſome, that *John* choſe rather

ther to preach, and to fulfil his Miniſtry in the Wilderneſs, than in the Temple, in order to make a moſt illuſtrious Difference between himſelf and *Chriſt*, of whom it was propheſied, that he ſhould frequently appear and teach in the Temple, *Mal.* iii. 1.

Under the *Jewiſh* Law, when any Sacrifice was offered for Sin, he that brought it, laid his Hands upon it, according to the Commandment of God, *Levit.* i. 4. iii. 2. iv. 4. and by that Rite, tranſferred his Sins upon the Victim, which, after ſuch Act, is ſaid *to take and to carry them away.* Accordingly, in the daily Sacrifices of the Lamb, the *Stationary* Men, who were the Repreſentatives of the People, and laid their Hands upon the Lambs that were to be offered, are ſaid to make an *Attonement for their Souls*, Exod. xxx. 15, 16. and, in Analogy hereunto, *Chriſt* is here called, by Way of Eminence, *the Lamb of God*, becauſe God intended to *lay upon him, who was manifeſt to take away Sin*, 1 John iii. 5. and came to ſuffer in our Stead, the Puniſhment due to the *Iniquities of us all.*

There is no mention of *Bethſaida* in the *Old Teſtament*, and the Reaſon is, becauſe (as *Joſephus* tells us) it was but a very ſmall Village, till *Philip the Tetrarch* built it up to the Bulk and Appearance of a very magnificent City, and gave it the Name of *Julius*, out of Reſpect to *Julia*, the Daughter of *Auguſtus Cæſar.* Its original Name in the *Hebrew* Tongue imports a Place of *fiſhing*, or elſe *hunting*; and for both theſe Exerciſes it was very commodiouſly ſituated. As it belonged to the Tribe of *Naphtali*, a Country remarkable for its Plenty of Deer, *Gen.* xlix. 21. it was excellently fitted for the latter of theſe Paſtimes; and as it lay on the North End of the Lake

Lake of *Gennezareth*, juſt where the River *Jordan* runs into it; it was ſo commodious for the former, that two of the Perſons juſt now mentioned, *viz. Peter* and *Andrew*, were Fiſhermen by Trade.

To aſcend and deſcend, to come and go, according to the *Hebrew* Manner of Expreſſion, denotes a free and familiar Commerce, and ſuch, no doubt, was the Miniſtry of Angels, at our Saviour's Temptation and Agony, at his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion. The Words, however, muſt be owned to be a plain Alluſion to *Jacob*'s Ladder, *Gen.* xxviii. 12, 13. on the Top of which was the Divine Majeſty, and the Angels aſcending to receive his Commands, and deſcending to execute them: And therefore others have thought that *Chriſt*, by theſe Words, intended to inform his Apoſtles, *That the Miracles which they ſhould ſoon ſee him perform, would declare the Divine Majeſty preſent with him, and giving him ſuch Commands, as he was to execute in this prophetic Office, as clearly and manifeſtly as if they had ſeen the Angels of God* aſcending and deſcending on him.

It is obſerved by ſeveral, that only *Ezekiel* in the *Old Teſtament*, and our Saviour in the *New*, are called by the Name of *the Son of Man*; that our Saviour is never ſo called but by himſelf; and that this is the common Appellation that he gives himſelf. *Ezekiel* was doubtleſs ſo called, to diſtinguiſh him from thoſe ſpiritual Beings, with whom he ſo frequently converſed: And our Saviour took upon him that Title, not only to diſtinguiſh his human from his divine Nature, but to expreſs his Humility likewiſe, and want of Reputation, while he continued in the Form of a Servant. *Chemnitius*, however, puts another Conſtruction

ſtruction upon this Title: He thinks, that as the Term *Meſſiah* (which is commonly called *Chriſt*) was taken out of *Daniel*, ſo that other of the Son of Man is taken from thence likewiſe; for behold one *like the Son of Man* (ſays the *Prophet*) *came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Antient of Days*, Chap. vii. 13. and that therefore our Saviour did uſually call himſelf ſo, in Compliance to the Prophecy, as well as to aſſert his Humanity, and declare himſelf his Father's Servant, according to the Character given of him by *Iſaiah* xlii. 1.

In all Probability it was at ſome Relation's Houſe, that the Marriage of *Cana* in *Galilee* was kept, becauſe *Mary* was ſo ſolicitous for the Supply of Wine; and the Opinion of the Antients is, that it was at the Houſe of *Alphæus* or *Cleopas*, who, at this Time, married his Son *Simon* the *Canaanite*, *Matth.* x. 4. tho' others will have it, that the Bridegroom was *Nathanael*.

The City *Capernaum* is no where mentioned in the *Old Teſtament*, either under this, or any Name like it; and therefore it is not improbable, that it was one of thoſe Towns which the *Jews* built after their Return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. It ſtood on the Sea-Coaſt, *i. e.* on the Coaſt of the *Sea of* Galilee, *in the Borders of* Zabulun *and* Nepthalim, *Matt.* iv. 15, 16. and conſequently towards the upper Part thereof. It took its Name, no doubt, from an adjacent Spring of great Repute for its clear and limpid Waters, and which, according to *Joſephus*, is by the Natives called *Capernaum*. As this Spring might be ſome Inducement for the Building of the Town in the Place where it ſtood, ſo its being a convenient Wafting-place,

place, from *Galilee* to any Parts on the other Side of the Sea, might be ſome Motive to our Lord for his moving from *Nazareth*, and making this the Place of his moſt conſtant Reſidence. Upon this Account *Capernaum* was highly honoured, and is called, by our Lord himſelf, *exalted unto Heaven*, but becauſe it made no right Uſe of this ſignal Favour, it drew from him the ſevere Denunciation, that it ſhould *be brought down to Hell*, Matt. xi. 23. which has abundantly been verified; for ſo far is it from being the Metropolis of all *Galilee*, (as it was once) that it conſiſted, long ſince, of no more than ſix poor Fiſhermen's Cottages, and may perhaps be now totally deſolate.

The Feaſt of the Paſſover is ſo well known, and has been ſo fully explained at the Time of its firſt Inſtitution, *Exod.* xii. that we need only remind our Reader, that from the Word *Paſach*, which ſignifies to *leap* or *skip over*, the *Jews* gave the Name of *Paſcha*, or *Paſſover*, to that great Feſtival, which was annually appointed in Commemoration of their Coming forth out of *Egypt*, becauſe, the Night before their Departure, the deſtroying Angel, who ſlew the Firſt-born of the *Egyptians*, paſſed over the Houſes of the *Iſraelites*, which were marked with the Blood of the Lamb killed the Evening before, and for this Reaſon called the *Paſchal Lamb*. The Feaſt itſelf began on the fourteenth Day of *Niſan*, which is the firſt Month in their ſacred, but the ſeventh is the civil Year, and anſwers, in Part, to our *March* and *April*; but as the *Jews* began their Days at ſix in the Evening, this Feaſt was to continue ſeven Days compleat, and ſo ended on the one and twentieth Day in the Evening.

As ſoon as our Saviour came to *Jeruſalem*, the firſt Thing he did was to reform the publick Abuſe and Profanation of the Temple, occaſioned by the Shops which Money-changers had ſet up, and the Beaſts which the Dealers therein uſed to bring into the Court of the *Gentiles*. This our Lord's Zeal for his Father's Honour could not well brook; and therefore, with a Scourge made of Cords, he drove all the Sellers and Barterers from the ſacred Ground, overturned the Tables of the Money-changers, and commanded thoſe who dealt in Doves or Pidgeons, to take away their Goods, and *make his Father's Houſe no longer a Houſe of Merchandize*.

This extraordinary Procedure incenſed the *Jews* to ſuch a Degree, that they came and demanded of him by what Authority he did theſe Things, and to give them ſome Evidence of his having a Commiſſion ſo to do: But to this he made no other Reply, than by foretelling his own Reſurrection, expreſſed in the Metaphor *of the Temple*, which they underſtood of the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, that had been ſix and forty Years a building, but he of the Temple of his own Body, which, in three Days, after they had ſlain it, he promiſed to revive. Though therefore, at this Time, he refuſed to work any Miracle at the Inſtigation of the *Jews*, yet, ſhortly after, we find him working many, which ſurprized the whole City, and excited the Curioſity of one Perſon in particular, whoſe Name was *Nicodemus*, (a conſiderable Man in the grand *Sanhedrim*, and of the Sect of the *Phariſees*) to repair to him (but privately, and in the Night-time, for fear of being known) and to declare freely to him, *That he verily believed he*

was come immediately from Heaven, becauſe the Miracles which he wrought were a Demonſtration of it.

Hereupon our bleſſed Saviour took Occaſion to let him know, that this Belief was not the only Qualification requiſite to become his Diſciple, and then proceeded to inſtruct him in the Myſtery of Regeneration, telling him, "That, as no Pro-" duction could tranſcend the Nature and Condi-" tion of its Parent, *Fleſh*, for Inſtance, tho' ne-" ver ſo much diverſified, could ſtill produce no " more than Fleſh; ſo this Formation of a new " Creature was to be effected by different Princi-" ples, namely, by the Water of Baptiſm, waſh-" ing away Sins, and by the Holy Spirit, giving " a Power and Efficacy to Mens Endeavours to do " well; which Spirit *bloweth where it liſteth*, and " is, as the Wind, certain and notorious in its " Effects, but ſecret in the Principle and Manner " of its Production."

This Doctrine of *Regeneration* (which to *Nicodemus* ſeemed ſo very abſtruſe) our Saviour proceeds to tell him was no more, in reſpect of other Myſteries of the Goſpel, than the Earth is in Compariſon of the Heavens, and ſo goes on to acquaint them with Matters of a ſublimer Nature; with his Deſcent from Heaven, his Death, his Aſcenſion, and the Bleſſing of that Redemption, which he came into the World to acompliſh. He inſtructs him in the Love of the Father, the Miſſion of the Son, the Rewards of Faith, and the Glories of Eternity. He upbraids the Unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the Difference between a pure and corrupt Conſcience, the Shame and Fears of the one, and the Confidence and Serenity of the other.

This

This is the Subſtance of our Saviour's Diſcourſe to *Nicodemus*, who afterwards proved a Convert; and no ſooner was the Paſſover ended, but our Lord, in Company with many of his Diſciples, who, by his miraculous Works, were convinced of his Divinity, went about the Province of *Judea*, making Proſelytes wherever he came, and cauſing them to be baptized by the Hands of his Diſciples, becauſe himſelf was employed in greater Affairs, *viz.* in teaching the People, and relieving their Neceſſities.

John the Baptiſt had, at this Time, removed his Station from *Bethabara* to *Ænon*, a Place remarkable (as its Name imports) for Springs and Waters, and therefore of great Conveniency for baptizing. While he was there, a Diſpute happened to ariſe between his Diſciples and certain *Jews*, who were preſent, which of the Baptiſms, that of *John*, or that of *Jeſus*, was preferable? And when his Diſciples, by way of Appeal to *John*, came and acquainted him, that the Perſon of whom he had given ſuch honourable Teſtimony, received Proſelytes (and that in vaſt Numbers) by the ſame Ceremony of Baptiſm as he did, *John* repeated the ſame Teſtimony again, and reminded his Diſciples, how frequently he had told them, "That the Perſon, of whom they ſpake, was the *Meſſiah*, whom God had ſent into the World for the Salvation of Mankind, and himſelf no more than his Herald; and that his Miniſtry therefore was now going to decline, even as, upon the Approach of the Sun, the Glory of the Morning-ſtar decreaſes." And having ſaid many Things of the like Nature, to prove *Jeſus* to be the Son of God, and of Coequality with the Father, he cloſed up his Commiſſion

with theſe important Words, *He that believes on the Son hath everlaſting Life; but he that believeth not on the Son, ſhall not ſee Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.*

John was at this Time in the Territories of *Herod Antipas*, and, as he was a Man of great Freedom of Speech upon all Occaſions, he was not afraid, when he came to *Herod*'s Court, to reprove him for his many Enormities, and particularly for his cohabiting with *Herodias*, the Wife of his Brother *Philip*, who was ſtill living. This exaſperated the Woman againſt him to ſuch a Degree, that, though *Herod*, at firſt, had ſome Eſteem and Reverence for him, yet, by her malicious inſtigation, ſhe prevailed with him to caſt him into Priſon, with a Purpoſe to have him deſtroyed, whenever ſhe could find ont a proper Opportunity.

There were three Courts belonging to the Temple. The Court of the Prieſts, where the Altar of Incenſe ſtood: The Court of the *Iſraelites*, where the *Jews*, that were clean, and the Proſelytes of Juſtice, *i. e.* thoſe who had embraced Circumciſion and the whole Law of *Moſes*, met at their Devotion; and the Court of the *Gentiles*, where the unclean *Jew*, and the *Gentile*, who owned the true God, without profeſſing *Judaiſm*, were permitted to come, and worſhip. Now, under the ſame Pretext of having the Sacrifices near at Hand, as well as out of a Contempt of that Court, where the *Gentile* Worſhippers were permitted to enter, the Prieſts, for their ſordid Gain, had permitted Beaſts and Poultry to be brought within this Court, and Graziers and Huckſters (whoſe Buſineſs properly was in the Markets of *Jeruſalem*) to mix with People at their Devotions, which was an Abuſe notoriouſly ſcandalous.

It

It may poſſibly be asked, how our bleſſed Lord, with nothing but a Whip in his Hand, ſhould be able to execute this heroick Act upon a Multitude of People, who might ſuffer Damage in their Wares, and, conſequently, be in a Diſpoſition to reſiſt him? Now, whoever conſiders that our Saviour had done enough already to prove himſelf a Prophet ſent from God, and that the general Conceſſion was, that a Prophet, thus ſent, had ſufficient Authority to rectify Diſorders, if he remembers, at the ſame Time, the great Reverence that was conſtantly paid to the Temple, and what Titles of Honour and Reſpect were given it by God himſelf, cannot but allow, that the preſent Abuſe of it was abominable, our Saviour's Zeal in redreſſing it commendable, and that, from all thinking and diſintereſted Perſons, it would, conſequently, meet with Countenance and Approbation: Nor is it to be doubted, but that a Conſciouſneſs of Guilt, in the Profaners themſelves, might, in ſome Meaſure, contribute to their Submiſſion and Acquieſcence; even in the ſame Manner as his Enemies were ſtruck backwards, with a Senſe of their own Guilt, as well as the Majeſty of his Appearance, and fell down to the Ground, when they came to apprehend him in the Garden, *John* xviii. 6.

It was an Appointment of the Law, that every Man from twenty Years old and upwards, ſhould annually pay into the Treaſury of the Temple, in order to defray the Expence of the daily Sacrifices, the Sum of half a Shekel, *Exod.* xxx. 12, 15. This, and the voluntary Oblations of People of all Ranks, occaſioned a Neceſſity of changing greater Coin into leſs, and very often of foreign Coin,

Coin into that which was current in the Nation. Under the Pretence therefore of having Things near at Hand, the Prieſts took this Opportunity to gratify their Covetouſneſs, by letting out Places to Money-Changers, who, to make up their Rent (which very likely was exorbitant) might extort from thoſe that came to them, or (as *Origen* imagines) give them baſe Money inſtead of good, and ſo made the Temple a Den of Thieves.

Whether it were the Prieſts, the Magiſtrates, or the common People, that put this Queſtion to our Saviour, 'tis certain, that they do not in the leaſt pretend to juſtify the Profanation, which he had thus reformed; and therefore their Principle ſeems to have been, "That, let Corruptions and "Abuſes in a Church be never ſo great, yet they "were not to be reformed, but either by the or-"dinary Authority of the Magiſtrate, or by an „extraordinary Authority from God. Such an "Authority they were ready to acknowledge in "Prophets; but then they inſiſtded that thoſe, "who pretended to this, and to have their Miſ-"ſion from God, ſhould be able to prove that "Miſſion by ſome miraculous Operations." But how they came to put this Queſtion to our Lord, after they had ſeen his Miracles, and knew that he claimed a Divine Commiſſion, and had told them, *that the Works he had done in his Father's Name bore witneſs of him*, John v. 36. can be imputed to nothing but their Perverſeneſs, and obſtinate Infidelity.

From *Herod*'s beginning to re-build the Temple, to the firſt Paſſover after our Saviour's Baptiſm, 'tis agreed, that the Time was exactly ſix and forty Years; but then *Joſephus* tells us, that the whole

whole was finiſhed in nine Years and an half. But this is to be underſtood of the grand Building only, ſince (according to the ſame Author) ſeveral new Works and Decorations were ſtill carrying on, and a matter of eighteen Thouſand Men employed therein, even to the Time that young *Agrippa* was made King of *Judea*, which was about the ſixtieth Year of the *Chriſtian Æra*.

The *Jews* had a Maxim, or proverbial Speech among them, that the *Sanctuary of Sanctuaries was the Meſſiah*, and therefore there could be no Impropriety in our Saviour's calling his Body a Temple: For, if the Apoſtle calls our Bodies *the Temple of God*, as he does, 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. and 2 *Cor.* vi. 1, 6. how much more does that Title belong to the Body of *Chriſt*, in which *the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt* always, and inſeparably?

But are Miracles alone a Demonſtration of a Perſon's being ſent by God? *Nicodemus* was not ignorant of the Caution which *Moſes* had given the *Jews* againſt falſe Prophets, *Deut.* xiii. 1, *&c.* nor does he here ſpeak of Miracles in general, but of thoſe particular ones which *Jeſus* had done in the Time of the Paſſover; and theſe were ſo great in their Nature, ſo ſolid in their Proof, ſo beneficial in their Effects, and in their End ſo well deſigned to confirm a Doctrine, every way ſuitable to the Divine Attributes, and to fulfil the Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah, the Son of Righteouſneſs, who was to riſe with healing in his Wings*, *Mal.* iv. 2. that there was the greateſt Aſſurance, that none, without an omnipotent Hand, could do them. Not to ſay that *Nicodemus* might have both examined the Doctrine, and enquired into the Life of *Jeſus*, before he made that Inference from his Miracles.

Some

Some have imagined from the ſeeming Abruptneſs of the Anſwer, which our Lord gives *Nicodemus*, that *Nicodemus* might have put ſome previous Queſtion to him (not recorded by the *Evangeliſt*) concerning the Means of attaining the Kingdom of God, *i. e.* Eternal Happineſs, or of qualifying himſelf to be a Diſciple of the *Meſſiah*, for, in that Senſe the Kingdom of God is likewiſe taken. But (beſides that the Word *anſwered* does not always, in the *New Teſtament*, ſignify a Reply to a Queſtion already propounded, but very frequently no more, than the Beginning of a new Speech) the Connection between the Compliment which *Nicodemus* makes our Lord, and our Lord's Reply to it, will not be amiſs, if we can but ſuppoſe in the Words this Implication: —— "Thy Acknow-
" ledgment of my Divine Miſſion and Authority,
" free and generous tho' it be, will not be ſuffi-
" cient to render thee a Member of that Kingdom
" which I am going to ſet up; for, *except a Man*
" *be born again*, *i. e.* renewed in his Mind, Will,
" and Affections, by the Operation of the Holy
" Goſt, and ſo become a new Creature, *he cannot*
" *ſee the Kingdom of God*, *i. e.* he cannot be a
" *Chriſtian* here, or a *Saint* hereafter."

Thoſe, who make the *Water* and the *Spirit*, here mentioned by our Saviour, one and the ſame Thing (which, to every common Reader, muſt, at firſt Sight, appear to be diſtinct) ſhould do well to conſider, that the Queſtion between *Chriſt* and *Nicodemus* was about what was requiſite to prepare a Man for the *the Kingdom*, *i. e.* God's Church, and make him Partaker of the Goſpel Bleſſings. Certain it is, that Baptiſm by Water was not only the common Method of receiving Proſelytes into the *Jewiſh* Church, but is declared likewiſe by our Lord

T. Smith Scul.

Our Saviour sendeth two of his Disciples to prepare the Passover, declaring his time was at hand. Matth. Chap. 26. v. 17.

Lord himſelf to be the ordinary Way of entering into his Kingdom, for *he that believeth and is baptized*, ſays he, *ſhall be ſaved*, Mark xvi. 16. and therefore he gave Commiſſion to his Apoſtles *to make Diſciples in all Nations by baptizing them*, *Matth.* xxviii. 19. Nay ſo far are the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit from ſuperſeeding the Neceſſity of this Ordinance, that, in the Apoſtolick Age, we find them rather eſteemed a proper Prediſpoſition for it. For, when the Holy Ghoſt fell upon *Cornelius* and his Company, in the ſame Manner that it fell upon the Apoſtles, on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, Acts xxxiv. 44. what is St. *Peter*'s Inference from theſe miraculous Gifts? Is it that the Perſons, on whom they reſted, had no need of Baptiſm? No; but rather that theſe extraordinary Gifts were a full Evidence, that they were the proper Objects of it, for *can any one*, ſays he, *forbid Water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized?* So far is the *Baptiſm of the Spirit* (even where it is undeniable) from excluding the *Baptiſm of Water*; and ſo ſtrong a Proof is the Inſtance before us, that the Graces of the Spirit may be the Foundation of a juſt Claim to Baptiſm, but never (where the Sacrament can be had) a lawful Diſpenſation to any Man for the Refuſal or Neglect of it.

Our Bleſſed Saviour might well wonder at *Nicodemus*'s Ignorance in the Point of Regeneration, when this was the common Notion of Proſelytiſm among the *Jews*, that he who was waſhed and circumciſed, was looked upon as a *recens natus*, an *Infant new born:* And when there were ſo many Paſſages in the Law and the Prophets, relating to this very Doctrine; for what elſe can the Meaning be of the *Circumciſion of the Heart*, com-

manded by *Moſes*, *Deut.* x. 16. of the *Renewal of a clean and right Spirit*, prayed for by *David*, *Pſal.* li. 10. of the *putting God's Law in the inward Parts*, mentioned by *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxxi. 33. and the giving his People a new Heart, and a new Spirit, promiſed by God, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26? Theſe, and many more, were Intimations of the Doctrine of Regeneration; but the *Phariſees* were ſo taken up with their Rites and Traditions, that they gave ſmall Attention to the ſpiritual Things of nearer and much greater Concernment to their Souls.

The *Evangeliſt* does no where mention the particular Place where our Saviour began his Baptiſm, but there is Reaſon to preſume, that it was ſomewhere about *Jericho*, becauſe there it was that *John the Baptiſt* firſt entered upon his Miniſtry; and becauſe it ſeems expedient, that he ſhould open the firſt Scene of his Office, where his faithful Forerunner had given ſuch glorious and advantageous Teſtimonies of him; and, in one and the ſame Place, compleat *John*'s Baptiſm of *Repentance for Sins* (which was preparatory to his Coming) by the Baptiſm of *Remiſſion of Sins*, which he alone had proper Power to give.

This *Antipas*, or *Antipater* (for they are Words of the ſame Signification) was the Son of *Herod the Great*, by one of his Wives named *Cleopatra*, a Native of *Jeruſalem*. In his firſt Will his Father (as we ſaid before) named him Succeſſor to his Kingdom, but afterwards he changed his Mind, made his Son *Archelaus* King of *Judea*, and gave to *Antipas* the Title only of *Tetrarch* of *Galilee* and *Peræa*, which made him appeal to *Auguſtus* at *Rome*, in order to have his Father's former Will

Will confirmed and the latter reverſed, but he did not obtain his End.

Herodias was the Daughter of *Ariſtobulus* and *Bernice*, Siſter to King *Agrippa*, and Granddaughter to *Herod the Great*. She was, at firſt, married to her Uncle *Philip*, Son of the ſame *Herod* by *Mariamne*, by whom ſhe had a Daughter named *Salome*, the ſame who pleaſed *Herod* ſo well in her Dancing; and, how ſhe came to run from one Brother to live with another, *Joſephus* has thus related the Story,——"*Antipas*, in "in his Paſſage to *Rome*, made ſome Stay with "his Brother *Philip*, where he fell ſo paſſionately "in Love with his Wife *Herodias*, that he could "not forbear expreſſing it to her, and promiſed "her withal, that at his Return from *Rome* he "would put away his own Wife and marry her. "Upon theſe Conditions *Herodias* accepted of the "Offer, and as ſoon as *Antipas* was returned, and "his Wife gone (for ſhe having Notice of the "Engagement between her Husband and *Herodias*, "made her Eſcape to her Father *Aretas* King of "*Petra*) ſhe, with her Daughter *Salome*, left her "Husband *Philip*, and coming directly to *Antipas*, "for ever after lived with him in a State of In-"ceſt, *Lev.* xviii. 15. nor was her Ambition much "leſs criminal than her Luſt; for, growing un-"eaſy to ſee her Brother *Agrippa* promoted to "the Title of a King, while her new Husband "had no more than that of a *Tetrarch*, ſhe preſſed "him ſo much that he determined to make a Jour-"ney to *Rome*, with an Intention to ask the like "Dignity of *Caligula* the Emperor; but the Em-"peror, being prejudiced by ſeveral Letters which "*Agrippa* had written againſt *Antipas*, inſtead of

" advancing him deprived him of his *Tetrarchy*, " and condemned him to perpetual Baniſhment." The Emperor however, underſtanding that *Herodias* was *Agrippa*'s Siſter, ſhewed an Inclination to pardon her; but ſhe choſe rather to follow her Husband in the Calamity ſhe had brought upon him, than to owe any Thing to her Brother's Fortune; ſo that they were both confiſcated, and baniſhed together, firſt into *France*, and afterwards into *Spain*, where they died.

The *Evangeliſts* have aſſigned the true Reaſon for the *Baptiſt*'s Impriſonment; but, ſince the *Phariſees*, very probably, repreſented him as an Author of a new Sect, a Promoter of Seditions and Rebellions, and a Perſon dangerous to the Government, by Reaſon of the Multitude of his Followers, *Antipas* craftily made this Pretence (as appears from *Joſephus*, l. xviii. c. 7.) for confining him; and the better to remove him from the People, ſent him bound out of *Galilee* into *Patræa*, to a ſtrong Caſtle called *Macbærus*, near the *Dead-Sea*, and towards the Borders of *Arabia*, where he continued above a Year in Priſon.

About the Time of *John*'s Impriſonment, our Lord, who, by the Hands of his Apoſtles had been baptizing for near ſeven or eight Months in *Judea*, underſtanding that the *Phariſees* began to be envious at him, for the great Multitudes of People that reſorted to him, reſolved to leave that Province and paſs into *Galilee*, in order to enter upon the more ſolemn Part of his miniſterial Function. In this Journey it was neceſſary for him to paſs through *Samaria*; and, as he travelled on Foot, and the Weather was hot, when he came within a little of *Sychar* he ſent his Diſciples into the

the City to buy Proviſions, and ſat himſelf down by the Side of a famous Well, called *Jacob*'s Well.

While he was ſitting there, a Woman of a looſe Life and Converſation came out of the City to draw Water; and when he requeſted ſome of her to drink, ſhe, perceiving that he was a *Jew*, took the Freedom to ask him, how he could offer any ſuch Requeſt to a *Samaritan*, ſince there were ſo great Feuds, and ſo little Dealings between them and the *Jews?* Little did the Woman know the Excellency of the Perſon who asked her ſo ſmall a Favour; but, in ſome meaſure to convince her, our Lord took Occaſion from hence, under the Metaphor of Water, to diſcourſe to her of ſpiritual Bleſſings, and to make her ſenſible of his Omniſcience, he reminded her of ſome Paſſages of her Life, particularly of the five Times ſhe had been divorced for her Adulteries, and of the State of Fornication, wherein ſhe then lived.

Convinced by this Diſcovery that he was a Prophet, ſhe propounded to him the great Queſtion, ſo much controverted between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, *viz.* which was the proper Place of publick Worſhip, *Gerizim* or *Jeruſalem?* To which our Saviour, in his Anſwer, gives manifeſtly the Preference to the *Jewiſh* Form and Place of Worſhip, but makes it a Queſtion of no great Moment, ſince the Time was approaching when all Sacrifices and ceremonial Rites ſhould ceaſe, and when God, who was a Spirit, expected to be worſhipped in a more rational and ſpiritual Manner, than hitherto he had been.

Our Saviour, before he had done talking with the Woman, and juſt as his Diſciples were return-

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ed from the City, had informed her, that himſelf was the *Meſſiah*, whom ſhe ſpoke of; whereupon, leaving her Water-pots, ſhe ran into the City, proclaiming aloud, that ſhe had met with a Perſon, who had told her all the Secrets of her Life, and who could be no other than that great Prophet, who was to come into the World; ſo that the Inhabitants waited on him at the Well, invited him into their City, received him with great Civility, and, tho' ſome believed on him from the Teſtimony of the Woman, many more did ſo from their own Conviction, in hearing his Sermons and divine Diſcourſes.

After two Days Stay in the City our Lord proceeded to *Cana*, where he changed the Water into Wine, and where the *Galileans*, who at the Paſſover had ſeen the Miracles which he did at *Jeruſalem*, received him with great Reverence and Reſpect. Hither it was that an Officer belonging to the Court, came and addreſſed himſelf to him with great Humility and Reverence, deſiring him that he would come and cure his Son, who was juſt at the Point of Death; and when, with more Importunity, he renewed his Requeſt, and our Lord, to ſhew the Excellency of his Power, that could cure in Abſence as well as in Preſence, diſmiſſed him with this kind Aſſurance, *that his Son was recovered*; the believing Father joyfully returning home, was, by the Way, congratulated with the welcome News of his Son's Recovery; and enquiring of his Servants the Hour when the Child began to amend, by the Account which they gave him he perceived, that it was at the very Inſtant when *Jeſus* had declared to him, *thy Son is well:* Whereupon both he and his whole Family,

Family, being convinced of our *Saviour*'s Divinity, were converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith.

Several Reaſons may be aſſigned why our Saviour delegated the Office of baptizing to his Apoſtles. 1. Becauſe it was no ways proper for him to baptize *in his own Name*. 2. Becauſe the Baptiſm that was peculiarly his, was the *Baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt*, Acts xv. 3. Becauſe it was an Office of more Importance to preach the Goſpel than to baptize, 1 *Cor.* i. 17. And, 4. Becauſe *Chriſt*'s baptizing of any might poſſibly have occaſioned Diſguſts and Jealouſies among the Diſciples, in the ſame Manner, as, in the early Ages of the Church, we find People valuing themſelves, and deſpiſing others, upon their being baptized by ſuch or ſuch an eminent Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* i. 12.

Galilee is a Province of *Paleſtine*, which extends itſelf chiefly into the *Northern* Parts thereof. The Tribes which it contains, are *Iſſachar*, *Zebulon*, *Naphthali*, and *Aſher*, with Part (as ſome ſay) of *Dan* and *Paræa*, beyond the River *Jordan*. On the *North*, it is bounded by *Lebanon* and *Syria*; on the *Weſt*, by *Phœnicea*; on the *South*, by *Samaria*; and on the *Eaſt* moſtly by the River *Jordan* and the *Sea of Galilee*, It is generally divided into two Parts, the *Upper*, and the *Lower Galilee*, whereof the former is called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, *Matth.* iv. 15. either becauſe it was chiefly poſſeſſed by the *Gentiles*, with *Jews* interſperſed among them, or rather, becauſe it bordered upon *Gentile* Nations, ſuch as the *Phœnicians*, *Syrians*, and *Arabians*. The whole Country (according to *Joſephus*) was fruitful and well cultivated, and the People laborious and induſtrious. The Number of its Towns and Villages was prodigious great,

and

and ſo well inhabited, that the leaſt of them did not contain leſs than fifteen Thouſand Souls. The Natives were a bold intrepid Race of Men, who defended themſelves bravely againſt the forreign Nations that ſurrounded them, but then their Wealth and Proweſs made them ſeditious, and very apt to rebel againſt the *Romans*, for which they ſometimes ſuffered very much.

Samaria is a Province of *Paleſtine* (ſo called from its City of the ſame Name, which was once the Capital of the Kingdom of *Iſrael*) which lies exactly between *Judea* to the *South*, and *Galilee* to the *North*, and extends itſelf from the *Mediterranean* Sea *Weſtward*, to the River *Jordan Eaſtward*, taking up the moſt conſiderable Part of what formerly belonged to the Tribe of *Ephraim*, and the Half-tribe of *Manaſſeh*, on the *Weſt-ſide* of *Jordan*.

Sychar is only a corrupt Pronunciation of *Sychem* or *Shechem*, which is the Capital of the Country that was once called *Samaria*. At preſent it is called *Naploſa*, and ſtands in a narrow Valley, between Mount *Gerizim* on the *South* (at the Foot of which it is ſituate) and *Ebal* on the *North*. On Mount *Gerizim* they had once a Temple which ſeemed to rival that of *Jeruſalem*, but in the Time of the *Maccabees* it was deſtroyed by *Hyrcanus*, and what they have now is only a little Place of Worſhip, to which, at certain Seaſons, they nevertheleſs repair for the Performance of the Rites of their Religion; but what thoſe Rites are, 'tis not eaſy to ſay. The whole Place, in ſhort, is ſtrangely decayed from what it was anciently; for it conſiſts now only of two Streets, that lie parallel under

under Mount *Gerizim*, but is full of Inhabitants, and the Seat of a *Baſſa*.

It is much to be queſtioned, whether the *Well*, that is at preſent ſhown to Travellers for *Jacob's Well*, be that where our Saviour diſcourſed the *Samaritan* Woman, becauſe it ſeems to be too remote from the Town for Women to come thither to draw Water; unleſs we may ſuppoſe that the City did formerly extend itſelf farther that Way, than it does now. However this be, the Well is covered with a ſmall Vault, into which you get down through a very ſtreight Hole, and then, removing a broad flat Stone, you diſcover the Mouth of the Well itſelf. It is dug in a firm Rock, about three Yards in Diameter, and thirty-five in Depth; and, to confute the Story which is commonly told to Travellers (that it is all the Year dry, except on the *Anniverſary*, when our Saviour ſat upon it, but that then it bubbles up with Abundance of Water) Mr. *Maundrel* tells us, that when they came to ſound it, they found no leſs than five Yards of Water in it.

The chief Reaſons of the *Jewiſh* Hatred againſt the *Samaritans* were theſe three, 1. The foreign Extraction of the *Samaritans*, they being moſt of them Deſcendants from the *Cutheans*, whom *Salmanezar* ſent to *Samaria*, when he carried away the Ten Tribes into Captivity, 2 *Kings* xviii. 9. 2. The Difference of their Religion and Worſhip, foraſmuch as that of the *Samaritans* was a Kind of Mixture of *Jewiſh* and *Pagan* Rites together; and, 3. The *Rival* Temple which the *Samaritans* had built on Mount *Gerizim*, and conſecrated to *Jupiter Olympus*, in order to avoid the Perſecution of *Antiochus*. *Joſeph. Antiq.* l. xii. c. 7. Theſe

were the chief Cauſes of the Animoſities between them; the *Jews* however did not carry their Reſentments ſo high, but that, in ſome Caſes, they would traffick or buy any Thing of them, but then the *Phariſees* came in with a Tradition, that they were not to borrow any Thing of them, or receive any Kindneſs from them, nor drink of their Water, or eat of their Morſels. This however our Lord deſpiſed, as having no Foundation either in the Law of God or Equity, and as tending to impair the Law of common Friendſhip and Humanity, and therefore we find him asking to drink with the *Samaritan* Woman, and afterwards going into the City and eating with the *Sichemites*.

The Words, *thou haſt had five Husbands*; but whether five ſucceſſively, and after the Death of one another, or five from whom ſhe had been divorced for Adultery, is not agreed. The beſt modern Interpreters however judge, that ſhe had been married to five ſeveral Men, but ſo behaved herſelf towards them, that, for her Adultery, or ſome other froward Behaviour, they had given her a Bill of Divorce. This ſeems more likely to be the true Senſe, than that, after the Death of five legal Husbands, ſhe ſhould live in Whoredom with a ſixth Perſon.

The *Jews* gave it out, that the *Samaritans* worſhipped God in the Image of a Dove, but this ſeems to be a mere Forgery upon them, 1. Becauſe among all the Idols which they worſhipped, when they came from *Aſſyria*, there is not the leaſt Hint of the Image of a Dove. 2. Becauſe *Joſephus*, who, in ſeveral Places of his Hiſtory, inveighs againſt them bitterly, does no where charge them with this Crime: And, 3. Becauſe it is a Thing utterly

utterly inconſiſtent with the Law of *Moſes*, which they embraced; for, as it forbids all Images, ſo it requires Men to ſacrifice the Dove to God; and ſurely nothing can be more abſurd, than to worſhip that which we are bound to ſacrifice. 'Tis very likely therefore, that the *Samaritans* had no falſe Objects of Worſhip among them, and yet they, as well as the *Jews*, might not be furniſhed with right Apprehenſions of the true One. They both were to blame, no doubt, in confining the Worſhip of God to any particular Place, and thinking that he could not be rightly adored, but either at *Gerazim*, according to the one, or at *Jeruſalem*, according to the other, when his Preſence is certainly every where, and in every Nation *he, that feareth him, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him*, Acts x. 35. They, as well as the *Jews*, might think, that God was pleaſed with outward Ordinances, with Sacrifices and Expiations, which *ſanctified only to the purifying of the Fleſh*; but perhaps they never ſuppoſed, that theſe Things were but Types and Figures of what was to ſucceed, and therefore to be of no longer Continuance than until the *Subſtance of the Things themſelves were come*. They, doubtleſs, both had ſome Expectations of a *Meſſiah*, but perhaps it never entered into their Heads, that he ſhould be the Angel of the Covenant, who, with the Incenſe of his Blood, *ſhould offer up the Prayers of all the Saints upon the Altar, that is before the Throne*, Rev. viii. 3. So that our Saviour, by this Part of his Diſcourſe with the Woman, plainly intimates, that, after his Reſurrection, and the Promulgation of his Goſpel, not only the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, but People of all Nations what-

ever, ſhould have righter Notions of God, the only Object of religious Worſhip, of the Extent and Univerſality of his Church, of the Qualifications requiſite in true Worſhippers, and of the Mediator, appointed by God to introduce and enforce their Prayers.

The Impriſonment of *John* had put an End to his Miniſtry; and therefore, to ſupply that Loſs, our Saviour himſelf began to preach the Sum and Subſtance of the Goſpel, *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Repentance*, in the Province of *Galilee*; which he did in ſuch an extraordinary Manner, that he was admired by all, and his Fame ſpread through the whole Country. Coming however to *Nazareth*, the Place of his Education, he went into the Synagogue on the *Sabbath-day*, and when he ſtood up, and read (as the Cuſtom for Laymen was at that Time) a Paſſage in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, beginning with theſe Words, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the Goſpel to the Poor*, &c. which he applied to himſelf (but in general Terms) and ſpake thereupon with ſo much Gracefulneſs, that the Eyes of the whole Congregation were turned upon him, admiring his Diſcourſe; many, who had known him in the Diſadvantages of his Education, began to have abject Thoughts of him upon the Meanneſs of his Extract, as if he had been no more than a *Carpenter*'s Son; ſo that, taking an Occaſion to upbraid them with their Ingratitude and Inſenſibility, he ſo far provoked the whole Aſſembly, that they hurried him out of the City, and brought him to the Brow of the Hill on which it was built, with a Deſign to have caſt him down from thence, and deſtroyed him, had not he, by a miraculous Power,

Power, withdrawn himſelf from the Fury of theſe wretched People, and left their City.

This barbarous Treatment of the *Nazarens* made our Saviour remove from them, and ſettle his Habitation in *Capernaum*, which was the Metropolis of *Galilee*, and, by Reaſon of the Lake which was near it, a Place highly convenient for his Deſigns. He had not long been here before great Multitudes flocked to him; and as he was walking one Day by the Side of the Lake, with a Crowd of People preſſing upon him, he ſaw two Fiſhing-Veſſels, one belonging to *Peter* and *Andrew*, and the other to *James* and *John*, (who were all Partners and Companions in that Buſineſs) and ſtepping into *Peter*'s Ship, he deſired him to put a little from the Shore, that from thence he might preach to the People.

That the *Synagogue-worſhip* was, at this Time, loaded with Rites and Ceremonies of human Invention, that the Prieſts were very defective in the Diſcharge of their Functions, and the Manners of thoſe who met there very much corrupted, no one can doubt, who is at all acquainted with the Scriptures and the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory; and yet we find, that our Saviour and his Diſciples (as Members of the Church of *Nazareth*) went conſtantly every *Sabbath-day* to theſe Synagogues, preſerving thereby *the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, and, upon ſlight Pretences, *not forſaking the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the Manner of ſome is*, Heb. x. 15.

What the Nature and Deſign of Synagogues were, and at what Time, and upon what Occaſion they were at firſt erected by the *Jews*, we have in a particular *Diſſertation* already diſcuſſed, and need

need only take Notice here, that tho' every Synagogue had a ſettled Reader, to whom was allowed an annual Stipend, yet when any grave and learned Perſon came in (eſpecially if he was a Stranger) it was cuſtomary to make him the Compliment of reading the Portion of Scripture appointed for the Day, *Acts* xiii. 15. which he always did in a ſtanding Poſture. For, *as the Law was given with Reverence*, ſays the *Jews*, *ſo it is to be handled with Reverence*; and when he had read what he thought fit, he might, if he was ſo diſpoſed and qualified, expound or comment upon it. The Character, which *John the Baptiſt* had given of our Saviour, and the Miracles which he had lately done in *Cana* and *Capernaum*, might poſſibly excite the Curioſity of the Maſter of the Synagogue to hear him read and expound; read in *Hebrew*, and expound in *Chaldee*, as *Ezra* had introduced the Cuſtom. In reading the Law, People were confined to the Leſſon of the Day, but the *Rabbins* have obſerved, that in reading the Prophets there was a greater Licence allowed; and therefore, tho' our Saviour might read juſt where the Book opened, yet there ſeems to be a good deal of the Hand of God in directing him to a Place which related to himſelf, and gave him ſo fair an Opportunity of declaring the Purpoſe of his Coming into the World, *viz.* to publiſh Redemption and Liberty, Pardon and Reconciliation with God.

Such kind of popular Executions as the *Nazarens* intended for our Saviour, when they would have caſt him from the Brow of the Hill, were then ſometimes tolerated; and, under Pretence of Zeal for the Law, ſeveral were put to Death (eſpeci-

(eſpecially in Times of publick Calamity, and when the *Jews* were in greateſt Diſtreſs) without the Formality of Juſtice. But what made the *Nazarens* ſo exceeding outragious againſt our Saviour was, his declaring them unworthy of the Miracles he had done at *Capernaum*, his equalizing himſelf to ſome of the greateſt of the ancient Prophets, and, by the Inſtances of the *Sidonian* Woman, and *Naaman* the *Syrian*, plainly intimating, that his Goſpel would chiefly be received by the *Gentiles*.

How he got out of their Hands, when they had laid hold of him, the Scripture does not tell us; nor is it our Concern to be curious to enquire. We know very well that it was an eaſy Thing for him, who was God as well as Man, to quit himſelf of any mortal Enemies: But how he did it, whether it was by blinding them for the preſent, or making himſelf inviſible, or merely by allaying their Rage, and changing their Wills, 'tis impoſſible to determine. Which Way ſoever he did it, 'twas certainly ſomething miraculous, and therefore deprived the *Nazarens* of the Liberty of complaining that he had done no Miracles among them,

The Lake, to which our Saviour retired, when he left the *Nazarens*, which (according to *Joſephus*) is forty Furlongs in Breadth, and in Length an hundred, was, in the Times of the *Old Teſtament*, called the *Sea of Cinnereth*, Numb. xxxiv. 11. but the Writers of the *New* have given it three different Appellations. For, as it called the *Sea of Galilee*, from the Province of *Galilee* in general, ſo it is called *the Sea of Tiberias*, from a Town of that Name ſtanding on its weſtern Shore; and

and the *Lake of Geneſareth*, from that particular Tract of *Galilee*, which bounded it a great Way, on the weſtern Side. The Lake lies upon a Gravel, which makes its Water both of a good Colour and Taſte. It is ſofter than either Fountain or River Water, and withal ſo very cold, that it will not grow warm tho' ſet in the Sun in the hotteſt Seaſon of the Year. The River *Jordan* runs through the midſt of it, which ſtocks it with a great Variety of Fiſh, of a peculiar Taſte and Shape, not to be equalled in any other Place. In ſhort, it was a common Saying among the *Jews*, *that God loved the Sea of* Galilee *more than any other Sea*; which ſo far holds good, that this Sea, above all others, was honoured with the Divine Preſence of our bleſſed Saviour, while he dwelt at *Capernaum*, very frequently, and even once after he was riſen from the Dead.

St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, in their Relations of this Tranſaction of *Chriſt*'s going into the Ship, are pretty uniform, but St. *Luke* differs from them ſo widely, that Interpreters have been at ſome Pains to reconcile them. For, whereas the two former tell us, that theſe Fiſhermen were *caſting a Net into the Sea*, St. *Luke* informs us, that *they had gone out of their Ships*, and had *waſhed their Nets*, beſides ſome other Variation in the Manner of the Call of the four Apoſtles. But not to enter into a minute Examination of Particulars, we ought to conſider, that ſome Allowances are reaſonable and neceſſary to be made, for the Variation of Circumſtances in one Hiſtorian, who makes it his Buſineſs to to recount Matters diſtinctly, and at large, and in another, whoſe Intention it is, only to declare Facts in general: without entering into the

the Series and Order of each Action. Now, this is the Caſe of the two former Evangeliſts: They deſigned no more than a ſummary Account of theſe four Apoſtles Call, and their Compliance with it; and therefore they contented themſelves with ſetting down apart, ſo much firſt, as relates to *Andrew* and *Peter*, and afterwards what related to *James* and *John*. But St. *Luke*, who propoſes to ſhew the Manner and whole Proceſs of the Call, records the Miracle at large, and interweaves ſeveral remarkable Paſſages, which were not needful to be mentioned in the brief Account of St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, but highly conducive to St. *Luke*'s Purpoſe of undertaking to deſcribe the miraculous Draught of Fiſhes, *Luke* v. 10. which, upon our Lord's Command to make a freſh Experiment, was taken.

Peter and his Companions had been hard at Work all Night, but without any manner of Succeſs; and therefore when Sermon was ended, and our Saviour ordered *Peter* to launch out farther, and to let down his Nets for a Draught, he modeſtly told him of their unſucceſsful Toiling all Night, but, nevertheleſs, in Obedience to him, he was willing: Nor had he Cauſe to repent, for, upon letting down the Nets, they incloſed ſuch a Multitude of Fiſhes, that their Tackle began to break, ſo that they were forced to call to their Partners in the other Ship, to come to their Aſſiſtance, becauſe the Draught was ſuch, that it loaded both the Veſſels ſo very deep, that they were in ſome Danger of ſinking before they got to Shore.

Amazed at this marvelous Sight, and dreading the viſible Appearance of ſo great and ſo divine

a Power juſt by him, *Peter* threw himſelf down at our Saviour's Feet, deſiring him to *depart from him*, becauſe he was a Perſon no ways worthy of his Preſence. But our Saviour bid him be of good Comfort, and, from the preſent Incident took Occaſion to inform him, that he had a nobler Work and Employment for him, even the *gaining of Mens Souls to Salvation*, if he would adjoin himſelf to him; and having given the like Invitation to the other three, *Andrew*, *James*, and *John*, they all obeyed his Call, and, leaving their Veſſels, Nets, Relations, and Employment, became, ever after, his conſtant and inſeparable Diſciples.

After the Choice of theſe four Diſciples, our Saviour returned with them into the City; and, on the next *Sabbath-day*, went into the chief Synagogue, and there preached to the People, with ſo much Force and Authority, and, and in a Manner, ſo widely different from their uſual Teachers, the Scribes, that all were aſtoniſhed at him; and, to increaſe their Admiration, one in the Congregation, whoſe Body was poſſeſſed with an unclean Spirit, cried out in an hideous Manner, *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou* Jeſus *of* Nazareth? *Art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God:* But *Jeſus*, who wanted not the Teſtimony of ſuch Confeſſors, commanded his Silence, and Departure out of the poor Man's Body, which immediately was done to the great Surprize and Amazement of all the Spectators.

From the Synagogue our Lord retired to *Peter*'s Houſe, where his Wife's Mother lay ſick of a Fever; but upon his approaching the Bed-ſide, and taking her by the Hand, he commanded the Fever to

to depart, and that Moment reſtored her to ſuch perfect Health, that immediately ſhe aroſe, and (as if ſhe had never been ſick) waited on the Company. This, and the other Miracle in the Synagogue (as ſoon as the Sun was ſet, and the *Sabbath* ended) gathered all the City together about *Peter*'s Houſe, bringing *Demoniacks*, and diſeaſed People of all Kinds, and begging the Relief of this heavenly Phyſician, who very readily cured them all, by a Touch only, or the Impoſition of his Hand.

The next morning he retired very early into a private Place, that, being free from the Noiſe and Importunities of the Multitude, he might have an Opportunity to pray; but even in his Solitude he was found out; and therefore to diſingage himſelf from ſuch a Crowd of Attendants, he told his Diſciples that the Purport of his Miſſion was, to preach the Goſpel in other neighbouring Cities; and, accordingly, leaving *Capernaum*, he made a Progreſs into *Galilee*, preaching in their publick Synagogues, curing all Kinds of Diſtempers, and diſpoſſeſſing all *Demoniacks* that were brought to him.

We have ſeveral Inſtances, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, of Perſons ſtruck with dreadful Apprehenſions at the Preſence of the Divine Majeſty, or even of ſome Angel, or a Prophet, delivering a Meſage from him. And therefore *Grotius* ſuppoſes, that *Peter*'s Caſe was much the ſame with that of the Widow of *Sarepta*, when ſhe complained to *Elijah*, *What have I to do with thee, O thou Man of God, art thou come unto me to call my Sins to Remembrance?* 1 Kings xvii. 18. But others more juſtly think, that *Peter*'s Words are ex-

preſſive rather of his high Sentiments of our Lord, and the Conſciouſneſs of his own Unworthineſs to be found in ſuch a Perſon's Company, and that therefore they do not a little reſemble that glorious Declaration of the Centurion in the Goſpel, *Lord, I am not worthy, that thou ſhouldeſt come under my Roof, but ſpeak the Word only, and my Servant ſhall be healed,* Matth. viii. 8.

The Words in our Tranſlation, *From henceforth thou ſhalt catch Men,* in the *Greek* have ſomething very remarkable. For it does not ſay, that *Peter* ſhould catch Men, as People generally do wild Beaſts or Fiſhes, in order to kill them, and eat them; but that he ſhould *take them alive,* as ſuch Fiſh and wild Creatures are taken, that are deſigned to be put in Stews and Parks; and therefore the Senſe of the Words is,——*Thou ſhalt be a Fiſher of Men,* but ſuch a Fiſher, as ſhall preſerve them alive; as ſhall retrieve them, in ſhort, from Error, and Ignorance, and Death; and conduct them to Truth, and Knowledge, and eternal Life.

Towards the Concluſion of the firſt Chapter of St. *John*'s Goſpel, we meet with a Call of ſome five of our Lord's Diſciples, about a Year prior to this; but, by the Account of the other *Evangeliſts,* it appears that they did not, at this Time, become our Saviour's conſtant Attendants, becauſe it is preſumable that, tho' he took this Opportunity to make himſelf known to them, yet he had not as yet any immediate Occaſion for them, and therefore remitted them to their reſpective Trades. Only *Philip* is ſuppoſed to have retained to him from the very firſt, becauſe he ſeems to have called him in a formal Manner, as he did not, at that Time, the reſt, *John* i. 43. and becauſe we find

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no farther Interview between him and *Philip* upon this Score, as there was between him and three, at leaſt, of the reſt, *Luke* v. 10, 11. Theſe three Diſciples therefore, *viz. Andrew, Peter*, and *John*, were twice called, but the former Calling was rather a Warning to hold themſelves in Readineſs for it, than an actual engaging them in his Service; but now in *Philip* we meet with no other Call, than what he had at firſt, and therefore, though the Fathers, and ſome ancient Writers, have given the Honour to St. *Andrew* of being the firſt called Diſciple; yet that Prerogative is evidently St. *Philip*'s. For, though *Andrew* and *Peter* were the firſt that came and converſed with our Lord, yet we find them returning to their Trades again, and not ordained to their Diſcipleſhip, till after the Time that the *Baptiſt* was caſt into Priſon.

There are ſeveral Opinions, wherein the Excellency of *Chriſt*'s Preaching, above that of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, did conſiſt. Some think, that his Teaching was not ſo much in the manner of an *Inſtructor*, as a *Legiſlator*, and one who, in his own Name, had Power to propound the Terms of Life and Death. But though this, in Relation to Chriſt's Divinity, be certainly true; yet it is not ſo agreeable, either to his prophetick Office, or his frequent Declarations, *that the Doctrine, which he taught, was not his own, but his who ſent him; and that he ſpake not of himſelf, but as his Father had commanded him*, John vii. 16. and xii. 49. Others imagine, that the Excellency of *Chriſt*'s Preaching conſiſted in the Miracles, wherewith he confirmed his Doctrine; for ſo the *Evangeliſt* repreſents the Matter: *They all marvelled, ſaying, what is this new Doctrine, for with Authority he commandeth*

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the unclean Spirits, and they obey him? Mark i. 27. But becauſe another *Evangeliſt* tells us, that it was his Doctrine, without his Miracles, that aſtoniſhed the People, *Matth.* vii. 29. others are of Opinion, that this Excellency lay in the graceful and lively Manner of his Delivery, not like the Teachers of the *Jews*, who read their Lectures of the Law ſo coldly, ſo perfunctorily, as never to affect the Hearts of their Hearers; and that, in ſhort, he ſpake as a Prophet, who had a full Commiſſion from God to deliver his Meſſage to them; not as the Scribes, who pretended only to deliver the Traditions of their Forefathers.

Thoſe, who are minded to depretiate our Saviour's Miracles, will needs perſuade us, that the *Jews*, having a Notion, that the Diſeaſes, whoſe Symptoms they could not account for, were inflicted by Devils, whom God might employ to chaſtiſe Mankind, did therefore give the Name of *Evil Spirits* to ſeveral Diſtempers, which proceeded merely from natural Cauſes; that, of theſe Diſtempers, ſuch as had any Thing loathſome or nauſeous attending them, they generally called by the Name of *an unclean Spirit*; and that, becauſe Sepulchres, of all other Places, were reputed the moſt polluted, therefore, whenever any crazy or melancholly People took it in their Heads to frequent ſuch Places, they were always ſaid to be poſſeſſed with ſuch Spirits. But how groundleſs this whole Hypotheſis is, we ſhall take Occaſion to ſhew at large, in our Anſwer to the *Objections*, belonging to this Chapter.

It may juſtly be made a Queſtion, whether the Devil, who poſſeſſed this Man, did actually know our Saviour to be the Son of God, as he pretended. There are two *Evangeliſts* who relate this Miracle,

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and, in the Concluſion of it, both tell us, that our Saviour *ſuffered not the Devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him to be Chriſt*, Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 41. but, notwithſtanding this, ſome Interpreters do not ſcruple to affirm the contrary, *viz.* That the Devil had no perfect Perception of our Lord's Divinity, until his Reſurrection from the Dead. The State of Humiliation which he choſe, the Obſcurity which he lived in, and the Perſecutions which he ſuffered, without ever employing his Power to repreſs them; the Care which he took to conceal his moſt renowned Actions, and to refer the Glory of them all to God alone, deceived the Devil, and kept him in Suſpence. For had he known *Jeſus*, ſay they, he would never have put into the Heart of *Judas* to betray, or of the *Jews* to crucify him, ſince this was the proper Way to accompliſh Man's Redemption. But the Anſwer to this is obvious,——That, though the Devil did know *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, yet he did not know the Myſtery of Man's Redemption. When he firſt eſſayed our Lord in his Temptations, he ſpeaks indeed in a diffident Manner, *If thou be the Son of God*; but, by his Defeat, he ſoon perceived that his Antagoniſt was more than Man. Though therefore he perfectly knew him to be the Son of God, yet ſeeing him inveſted with our Nature, he might, very likely, be ſo far infatuated, as to think, that, by deſtroying his Humanity, he might poſſibly defeat God's great Deſign. For how ſublime ſoever we may ſuppoſe his intellective Faculties to be, yet the wonderful Work of Man's Salvation by the Death of *Chriſt*, the Apoſtle plainly tells us, is, what no finite Underſtanding could comprehend, until *God was pleaſed to make*

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all Men ſee, what is the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery, which, from the Beginning of the World, hath been hid in God, to the Intent that now, unto Principalities, and Powers in heavenly Places, might be known, by the Church, the manifold Wiſdom of God, according to the eternal Purpoſe, which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, *Eph.* iii. 9. *&c.*

Fevers are common Diſtempers, and very often cured by ordinary Means, ſo that the Nature of this Miracle did not lie in the Cure of an incurable Diſeaſe, but in the Manner of the Cure, which was with a Touch, the Suddenneſs of it, her Fever immediately left her; and the Perfectneſs of it, in that ſhe was able to riſe, and wait on the Company. This is ſaid to be *Peter*'s Wife's Mother; and from hence it may be preſumed, that *Peter*, who was himſelf of *Bethſaida*, had married a Woman of *Capernaum*, and there lived with his Mother-in-Law.

The curing of Diſeaſes, and the caſting out of Devils, were undoubtedly two diſtinct Things, and conſequently, is an Error in thoſe, who, in their *Annotations* upon the very Texts, where they are mentioned ſeparately, endeavour to perſuade us, that the Devils caſt out were only Diſeaſes.

In our Lord's Progreſs through *Galilee*, he met with a Man overſpread with a foul Leproſy, whom, upon his humble Petition, with one Touch he immediately healed, but at the ſame Time gave him ſtrict Charge not to diſcover it to any one, until he had preſented himſelf before the Prieſt, and offered the Sacrifice that was appointed for a Teſtimony of his Cure: But the poor Man, out of the Abundance of his Joy, could not refrain from publiſhing it abroad, wherever he came,

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Our Saviour cures two Blind Men by touching their Eyes. Matt. 9. 27. 28

came, which ſtill increaſed our Saviour's Fame, ſo that he avoided returning openly into the City of *Capernaum*, leſt the Multitude of his Followers ſhould give ſome Umbrage to the State, and therefore, having finiſhed his Progreſs through *Galilee* (which laſted for almoſt three Months) he retired into a deſart Place, and there employed ſome Part of his Time in Prayer.

Upon leaving his Retirement, he went privately into *Capernaum*, but it was not long before he was diſcovered; and then there were ſoon ſuch vaſt Crowds of People gathered together to hear his Sermons, and to bring them that were diſeaſed, that the Houſe where he was, and all the Court-yard about it, were not ſufficient to contain them. In the Houſe were many great Perſons; *Phariſees*, and Doctors of the Law, from *Jeruſalem* and *Judea*, as well as *Galilee*; who, led thither by their Curioſity, ſat hearing his Diſcourſes, and obſerving his Miracles, when four Men came bearing a Paralytick on his Bed; but finding it impoſſible to paſs through the Throng, they ventured to uncover the Houſe, and to let down the ſick Man, Bed and all, into the very Room where he was ſitting.

Our bleſſed Saviour, being not a little pleaſed with ſuch an Inſtance of their Faith and Reliance on his Mercy, was reſolved to cure the Man; and accordingly, he gave him an Abſolution from his Sins: This provoked the Indignation of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, as deeming him guilty of Blaſphemy, becauſe none, as they imagined, could forgive Sins but God alone. But he, knowing their ſecret Thoughts, firſt reproved their Cenſoriouſneſs; and then, by curing the Patient before them,

them, plainly demonſtrated what Authority he had to forgive Sins. For tho' the Power of healing, be much inferior to that of forgiving Sins, yet, becauſe it is not ſo eaſy to impoſe a Cure upon the World, where Men's Senſes are Witneſſes, as Remiſſion of Sins, which is a ſecret and inviſible Operation; therefore all the People, who were convinced, by their Eyes, of the Efficacy of *Chriſt*'s laſt Words, *Riſe and Walk*, were ſatisfied of the Truth of the former, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*; and accordingly they glorified the Almighty, who had manifeſted ſuch Power on Earth, and being filled with reverential Fear, declared that *they had ſeen ſtrange and wonderful Things that Day.*

The Leproſy was a Diſtemper very common among the *Jews*. It proceeding from a general Corruption of the Blood and Juices, rendered the Perſon, tainted with it, extreamly loathſome and deformed; and, in hot Countries eſpecially, was, of all Diſtempers, the moſt ſpreading in the Body, and the moſt contagious to others. But then, with regard to the Notions of the *Jews*, and their Law concerning it, it was ſtill more deteſtable. It ſeparated the Perſon, infected with it, from all civil and religious Communion; it diſtinguiſhed him by all the outward Significations of Sorrow and Shame; it was generally looked upon as a Plague inflicted by God, for ſome enormous Crime; it was thought ſo far above the Power of Art, that the very Attempt to cure it by Medicine was eſteemed an impious Preſumption. In ſhort, it was dreaded as the higheſt of all legal Pollutions; and required a great Variety of Luſtrations, before the Patient could be reſtored to the Privilege of a *Jew*, *Levit.* xiii.

But

But how came our Saviour to run the Hazard of making himſelf unclean, *Levit.* v. 3. by touching one, that was manifeſtly ſo? Now, whatever the Law concerning the Leper's Uncleanneſs might be, it ſeems, as if the Prieſt, that officiated about him, was not affected by it, becauſe we find him directed to make ſo near an Examination and Inſpection into his Diſtemper, *Levit.* xiii. 14, *&c.* *Aaron*, we may obſerve, tho' he officiated about his Siſter *Miriam* in her Leproſy, is not ſaid to have contracted any Pollution by it; and therefore well might a much greater High-prieſt than *Aaron*, in virtue of his Office, claim the ſame Immunity. But then, in Virtue of his Divinity, it was impoſſible for him to incur any legal Uncleanneſs: As therefore the Effect wrought upon this Leper, was a plain Demonſtration, that the *Finger of God was in it*, and he conſequently approved of the Action, ſo the *Jews* make it a received Rule, that a *Prophet might vary from, and even change the Ritual Law:* And, from hence we may infer, that as *Elijah* and *Eliſha* both might touch the dead Children whom they raiſed to Life again, without any Imputation of Uncleanneſs, 1 *King.* xvii. 19. and 2 King iv. 34. ſo might our Saviour touch this Leper; tho' the Opinion of ſome is, that he did not properly touch him, as a Leper, becauſe the Moment that he ſtretched out his Hands, the Leproſy was cured; but if it were not, the Obſervation of *Theophylact* ſtill ſtands good, *viz. That our Lord might touch the Leper, in order to ſhew, that it was not neceſſary to obſerve thoſe leſſer Matters of the Law; that touching an unclean Perſon did not defile one that was pure himſelf; and that the only Thing, indeed, that did defile, was the Leproſy of the Soul.*

If it be asked, Why our Saviour ſhould ſo often command the concealing his Miracles? We may aſſign for Reaſons, not only his Modeſty and great Humility, that there might be no Appearance of Oſtentation in him, and that the *Jews* might have no Pretence to accuſe him *of ſeeking his own Glory*, Matt. xii. 16. but becauſe, at this Time, it was not proper to irritate the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* (who had already made him quit *Judea*) too much. He knew, that in ſuch a determinate Space, they would bring about what God in his Counſel had decreed: In the mean Time, *he was to work the Work of him that ſent him, while it was Day*, John ix. 4. and to propagate his Goſpel, as much as poſſibly he could, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; which could not have been ſo conveniently done, if the Greatneſs of his Miracles had once provoked the Malice and Envy of his Enemies, to make their utmoſt Oppoſition againſt him. He knew likewiſe the mad and capricious Humour of the Multitude, and had Reaſon to apprehend *that they might come and take him away by Force, and make him a King*, John vi. 15. if all his Miracles had been blazed abroad, before he had ſufficiently inſtructed them in the ſpiritual Nature of his Kingdom. As therefore he was far from being a Friend to Popularity, or Sedition, he deſired that ſeveral of his Miracles might be ſuppreſſed; leſt any bad Conſequences ſhould attend the Publication of them, until his own Reſurrection from the Dead ſhould be an undeniable Proof and Confirmation of all the reſt. And this I take to be the Reaſon of his referring the *Phariſees*, when they came to demand a Sign of him, to that of the Prophet *Jonah*, Matt. xii. 39. whereby he implyed,

ed, that he would uſe no more Means for their Conviction, until, by the Miracle of his Reſurrection, his divine Power, and the Completion of the antient Types and Prophecies ſhould be ſo evidently manifeſted, as to leave them without all excuſe.

The Prieſthood, at this Time, was much degenerated from its primitive Inſtitution, and many human Rites and Ordinances were added to God's Law, concerning the Prieſts Examination of the Leper, who pretended to be clean; and yet our Lord ſent this Leper to ſubmit to all theſe new-invented Ceremonies, as knowing, that tho' they did indeed corrupt, yet they did not extinguiſh the divine Inſtitution. The divine Inſtitution was no more than this, That when a Leper was cured, he was to appear at the City Gate, and the Prieſts were to examine whether he was truely healed, or no; if he was, the Prieſt received him into the City, and by Degrees into the Temple, whither he ſhould bring two clean Birds of any Kind, (the marginal Note ſays Sparrows) and having made a Bunch of Cedar and Hyſop, mixed together, ſhould tye them with a ſcarlet Ribbon made of Wool; that to this Bunch of Ceder and Hyſop one of theſe Birds ſhould be faſtened alive, and the other killed by the Leper that was cured, and its Blood received in a Veſſel, filled with Water; that when this was done, the Prieſt ſhould take the Bunch with the live Bird, and having dipped both in the Water, tinged with the Blood of the other Bird, ſhould ſeven Times ſprinkle the Leper with it; and that, after this, the live Bird ſhould be let looſe to flye where it would, and the Perſon thus healed

and

and purified, ſhould again be admitted to the Society of the Healthy, and a Communion in religious Offices, *Levit.* xiv. 1, *&c.*

Various are the Senſes to which the Words, *a Teſtament to them* are taken; for they may ſignify that the Gift or Oblation, which the Leper was to carry, would be a Means to evince the Perfection of his Cure, when the Prieſts had examined and admitted it as ſuch; that this would likewiſe be an Evidence to the People, who ſtood by at that Time, and ſaw him cured, when they ſhould hear that the Prieſt had pronounced him clean; a Proof to the Prieſts, that himſelf was an Obſerver of the Law, by requiring his Patient to comply with the Ceremonies of it; and a full Demonſtration that he was a Prophet come from God, ſince they themſelves owned that a Leproſy could only be cured by *the Finger of God.*

The Word *paralytick*, in the *Greek*, ſignifies to *reſolve* or *relax*, and ſeems to imply that this Diſtemper is a Relaxation of the Nerves, tho' it ſometimes proceeds from other Cauſes. It is always attended with great Weakneſſes and Obſtructions of the Blood and Juices, which deprive the Limbs of their Motion, and ſometimes occaſion great Pain. This Diſtemper is reckoned above the Power of all Medicines to remove; and yet our Saviour cured it ſeveral Times, merely by a Word ſpeaking.

But how could they poſſibly uncover the Houſe, to let down the Paralytick into the Room where *Chriſt* was, when they could not ſo much as get to it, much leſs get upon it, by Reaſon of the Throng that was before the Door? Now, to have a right Notion of this Matter, we muſt obſerve, that

that the Houſes in *Judea* were, for the moſt part (even as they are to this Day) low built and flat roofed, and ſurrounded with a Battlement about Breaſt high, according to God's own Injuction, *Deut.* xxii. 8. ſo that, to go up to the Top of their Houſes, the *Jews* had two Ways; one by a Pair of Stairs within the Houſe, leading up to a Trap-Door, which lay even with the Roof; and the other on the Outſide of the Houſe, by a Ladder, or Pair of Stairs rather, either fixed or moveable, by which they could aſcend to the Roof, when they pleaſed, without ever going into the Houſe itſelf. Since this then was the general Faſhion of *Jewiſh* Houſes, we need not doubt, but that this at *Capernaum* was of the ſame Figure and Make; and therefore the Bearers of the Paralytick, finding that they could not come at the Door, by Reaſon of the Crowd, bethought themſelves of another Expedient. They went round a private Way, and coming to the Stairs, which ſtood on the Outſide of the Houſe, up theſe they carry him, and preſently gain the Top. But finding the Trap-Door (or Way of the Roof, as the *Jews* call it) ſhut againſt them, they immediately go to work, and forcing it open (which St. *Luke* calls *uncovering* or *breaking up the Roof*, Chap. ii. 4. becauſe the Door, which lay even with the Roof, when let down and ſhut, was reputed a Part of it) they conveyed him down that Way, which St. *Luke* calls letting him down through the Tiling, *i. e.* through the Roof, which (except where the Door was) was all paved with large Tiles; and by this Means they found it no difficult Matter *to place him in the midſt before* Jeſus.

Some

Some have ſuppoſed, that becauſe the Hiſtory makes no Mention of any Faith, but that of the Friends and Bearers of this impotent Man, that therefore the Patient himſelf had no Part in that virtuous Diſpoſition, which inclined our Saviour to compaſſionate him; and thence they infer, how far a Man be benefited by the Faith and Interceſſion of others in his Behalf. But it is a Miſtake to think, that the Words, *their Faith*, exclude that of the ſick Perſon: For had he not been perſuaded that *Chriſt* was able to cure him, he would never have ſuffered himſelf to be preſented to him, in a Method ſo troubleſom to his weak Condition. We read, indeed, of no Petition that he made to our Lord, but the Violence of his Diſtemper might poſſibly have deprived him of the Uſe of Speech; or if it had not, the very Spectacle of a Body ſo debilitated, the Manner of the Action, and the Fatigue which he muſt have undergone in it, all ſpoke for him, and carried a more moving Eloquence, than it was poſſible for any Tongue to utter.

The *Jews* were of this Perſuaſion, That every Diſeaſe of the Body (thoſe eſpecially which were of a grievous Nature) were ſent upon Men for the Puniſhment of their Sins; and tho' they might carry this Maxim too far, *John* ix. 3. yet ſure it is, that the Scriptures repreſent moſt of the Calamities of Life, as the natural Effect of Men's Iniquities. And therefore ſome have obſerved, that as the Word *Sins*, is frequently put for the Puniſhment of Sins, our Saviour's forgiving the Man's Sins, was no more than a Declaration of his Intention to cure his Diſtemper: Whereas it is plain, that our Saviour ſpeaks of them, as two diſtinct

diſtinct Things, when he puts the Queſtion to the Company, *Whether it is eaſier to ſay, Thy Sins be forgiven thee, or to ſay, Take up thy Bed and walk*, Matt. ix. 4.

The Word Blaſphemy, in heathen Writers, ſignifies no more than Slander or Calumny or opprobrious Language of any Kind, ſuch as tends to impair a Man's good Name; but, in the ſacred Stile, it means unworthy and injurious Talk concerning God's Nature or Attributes, as when we aſcribe to him ſuch Qualities as belong not to him, or rob him of thoſe that do; aſcribing to him, the Infirmities of Man, or to Man the Perfections of God. This is the Nature of the Sin, and the Puniſhment of it, under the Law, was ſtoning without the Gates of the City, *Levit.* xxiv. 15, 16.

While our Lord continued at *Capernaum*, he went out one Day (as frequently he did) to the Lake-ſide, and finding one *Matthew*, otherwiſe named *Levi*, the Son of *Alpheus*, a rich *Publican*, ſitting in his Office, he called him to be one of his Diſciples, who immedialely forſook his gainful Employment, and afterwards became both an Apoſtle and Evangeliſt. Within a few Days after his Converſion, *Matthew* invited our Saviour and his Diſciples, and, among others, ſome of the Profeſſion which he had forſook, to the Feaſt. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* (who accounted all in a manner Sinners, beſides themſelves, but more eſpecially theſe *Publicans*) began to expoſtulate with theſe Diſciples, how it came to paſs that their Maſter, who ſet himſelf up for a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, and a Reformer of others, came to be ſo intimate with theſe lewd and loſt Wretches, as to ſit and eat with them at the ſame Table:

But when our Saviour undertook the Argument, he gave ſo fair an Account of the Reaſons for his converſing with theſe People, as made the very Objection become his Apology. But all this would not content the *Phariſees*, and therefore joining with ſome of *John*'s Diſciples, that were then preſent, they came and demanded of him, why it was that his Diſciples obſerved no Faſts, when they, and *John*'s Diſciples were known to keep many? To which he replied, *That it was not the proper Seaſon for the Friends of the Bridegroom to faſt and afflict themſelves, while they had the Bridegroom's Company, but when they were deprived of it; and that it would be as imprudent and prepoſterous a Thing, to impoſe rigorous Auſterities upon his Diſciples (who were but Novices in Religion, and inured to another Way of Life)* as it would be be to ſew a Piece of new Cloth upon a rotten Garment, which, upon any Streſs, would make the Rent worſe, or to put new Wine into old leathern Bottles; which, upon the leaſt Fermentation, would both burſt the Bottles, and deſtroy the Liquor; *but ſee the Tyranny of Cuſtom, and how difficult it is to change an inveterate Habit; in that* none having drank the old Wine deſireth the new, for he ſaith the old is better.

Grotius, and thoſe that follow him, are of Opinion, that the *Levi* mentioned *Luke* v. 27. is not the ſame with *Matthew*, in *Matt.* ix. 9. becauſe *Matthew* never calls himſelf *Levi*, nor does *Mark* or *Luke* ever call *Levi*, *Matthew*. But the Anſwer to this has long ſince been given by St. *Jerom*, in *Matt.* ix. 9. *viz.* that the other two *Evangeliſts* (as their Charity and good Nature became them) endeavoured to cover the Infamy of their Brother's former

former Way of Life, and therefore never call him the *Publican*, leſt they ſhould ſeem to Reproach him with the Remembrance of his former Converſation, but ſpeak of him under his other Name; tho' he, out of his great Humility, in the *Goſpel* written by himſelf, does not only take the more commonly known Name of *Matthew*, but adds that odious Title likewiſe of *Matthew the Publican*. Since then the Cuſtom of having more Names than one, is known to have prevailed among the *Jews*; and, as St. *Mark* calls him *Levi* the Son of *Alpheus*, ſo *Matthew*, in all Church Hiſtory, is ſaid to be the Son of one of the ſame Name; and the Hiſtory of the Perſon, *Levi* in *Mark* and *Luke*, agrees ſo exactly with what is ſaid of him, who in the other Evangeliſt is called *Matthew*, that there is not one circumſtantial Difference to be perceived, we cannot but conclude, that this *Matthew* and *Levi* were one and the ſame Perſon.

The old Enemies of our Religion, *Julian* and *Porphyry*, accuſed *Matthew* of Folley and Inconſiderateneſs, in following a Man whom he knew nothing of. But St. *Jerom*'s Reply is, That he could not want a ſufficient Knowledge both of our Saviour's Doctrine and Miracle before his Call. The *Publicans* we find were great Frequenters of the Synagogues and other Places where our Saviour taught; and of all others expreſſed the greateſt Eagerneſs to be inſtructed by him; and therefore, if *Matthew* was of the ſame Diſpoſition, he could not want Opportunities of being acquainted with our Saviour's Preaching; and of the wonderful Works which he did every where; but more eſpecially of thoſe at *Capernaum*, it was impoſſible for him

to be ignorant. It is very probable, therefore, that *Matthew*, upon ſuch Conviction, was inclinable to become one of our Saviour's Diſciples, even before he called him. But if he was not, the Luſtre and Majeſty of the Divinity, hid under the Manhood, but ſhining conſpicuouſly in the Face of *Jeſus Chriſt*, was enough to attract every one that he caſt his Eyes upon; at leaſt that powerful Impulſe, which he, to whom all Hearts are open, knew how to inject into *Matthew*'s Breaſt, could not fail to do it; and from this ſupernatural Movement, doubtleſs it chiefly was, that ſo readily, and without Heſitation, he left all and followed *Chriſt*.

Nor was it only among the *Jews*, but among the *Heathens* likewiſe, that the Name of a *Publican* was infamous. For, according to their Writers, they were accounted no better than Thieves and Cheats; free Violence and unpuniſhed Rapine, and ſhameleſs Covetouſneſs were their publick Profeſſion. And it is ſaid of *Theocritus*, that being asked, *Which was the cruelſt among the Beaſts?* his Reply was, *That of thoſe in the Mountains, the Bear and the Lion, but of thoſe in the City, the* Publicans *and* Sycophants.

The Arguments which our Saviour uſes to the *Phariſees* for his keeping Company with *Publicans* and *Sinners*, are theſe three: Firſt, *They that are whole, need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick*, Matt. ix. 12. by which he intimates to them, that in converſing with ſuch ſort of Perſons, he was about the Diſcharge of his proper Buſineſs; and that, as a Phyſician's Profeſſion did ſometimes call him among Patients that had the moſt virulent Diſtempers; ſo he, whoſe Office it was to heal Souls,

Souls, ought not to refuſe his Aſſiſtance to thoſe, whoſe Circumſtances moſt of all wanted his Help and Advice. Secondly, God's ſaying, in the Prophet *Hoſea*, vi. 6. *that he would have Mercy*, meaning thereby all the kind Offices, whereby we promote our Neighbour's Advantage, *rather than Sacrifice*, i. e. the Rites and Ordinances of the ceremonial Law; whereby he taught them, that tho' theſe latter might, in their due Place and Seaſon, be acceptable to God, yet Charity to the Souls of Men (which was the higheſt Act of Mercy, and that wherein he was then employing himſelf) was much more eſteemed by him. Thirdly, That *he came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*, or that the great Deſign of his Appearance in the World was, to change the corrupt Manners and Diſpoſitions of Men; a Change, which the Righteous ſtanding leſs in need of, ſhould no more grudge the Opportunities of it to Sinners, than the healthful ought to think themſelves diſparaged, when the Phyſician forbears the Viſits to them, which he makes to the Sick. Some Commentators however have obſerved, in this laſt Argument, a ſevere Irony, and thus they expound it, *I am not come to cure thoſe that think themſelves well, nor to ſave thoſe that account themſelves righteous, as you* Phariſees *ſeem to do; but I am to cure thoſe who find themſelves ſick, and are ſenſible of the Burthen of their manifold Iniquities, as theſe* Publicans *ſeem to be.*

Beſides the publick Faſts appointed by the Church, the *Phariſees* in general did faſt two Days every Week, and thoſe of more Strictneſs than ordinary, four. The Diſciples of *John* too, who was himſelf a Man of ſuch Abſtinence, that our

our Saviour ſays of him, He *came* (comparatively) *neither eating nor drinking*, Matt. xi. 18. did, no doubt, in a great Meaſure, follow the Example of their Maſter; and now, that he was confined in Priſon, might, very probably, double their Faſts, and their Prayers to God for his Deliverance. And if they and the *Phariſees* were able to do this, why ſhould the Diſciples of *Chriſt* be deemed inſufficient? Now to this it may be anſwered, that among the *Jews*, there were not only the Sects of *Eſſenes* and *Phariſees*, who led an auſtere Life, but alſo Schools of the Prophets, many of whom were *Nazarites*, and conſecrated to the Service of God; and that, beſides theſe, the *Jews* had likewiſe academical and private Schools, from whence might come Diſciples to *John*, and the *Phariſees*, already trained up to Faſting and Pennance, and other ſevere Duties of Religion. But now it is certain, that the Diſciples of our Lord were choſen from their Fiſhing-trade, and ſo came to him wholly unacquainted with, and unfitted for theſe Auſterities, which, to impoſe upon them now, was not neceſſary: Becauſe his Continuance among them was not to be long, and after his Departure they would have Occaſion more than enough, to exerciſe theſe, and many more painful Duties in the Propagation of the Goſpel, and the Perſecutions which would attend it.

The *Baptiſt*, in his Diſcourſe to his Diſciples, had compared our Saviour to a Bridegroom, and himſelf to his Friend or chief Gueſt, *John* iii. 29. and therefore, as our Saviour deſignedly makes uſe of the ſame Alluſion, his Argument runs thus, *I am the Bridegroom, and my Church is my Bride; as long as I am here, laſts the Marriage-Feaſt, and my*

my Diſciples are the Children or Friends of the Bridegroom, and ſo are not to mourn, but to rejoice with me, while this Time laſts: But at my Death and Departure, this Bridegroom ſhall be taken from them, and then will it be time for them to faſt and mourn.

The Bottles which were in the Eaſt, and at this Time are very common in *France*, were not made of Glaſs, as ours are, but were certain Bags made of Goats-skins, having the Hair on the Inſide, and being well pitched and ſewed together. They are very good Veſſels to preſerve Wine, Oil, or any other Liquor in; and in this Reſpect, more eſpecially, very convenient to carry from Place to Place, becauſe, fall they never ſo often, they will not break, unleſs they be very old or decayed. In which Senſe our Saviour compares his Diſciples, before the Deſcent of the Holy Spirit upon them, to *old Bottles*, becauſe they were not capable either of comprehending or practiſing all that Perfection which he came into the World to teach Mankind.

DISSER-

DISSERTATION I.

Objections made to the Hiſtory. Anſwered, by ſhewing that there is no Contradiction in our Lord's Genealogy; in our Lord's affirming John *to be* Elias; *and in the Taxation by St.* Matthew. *Why our Lord choſe a Virgin, that was married, to be his Mother. The great Objection of the* Jews, *from our Saviour's Want of a Kingdom, anſwered. The Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon Chriſt, no Argument againſt his Divinity; nor his being tempted by the Devil. Miracles, in Reſpect of God, all alike. The Demoniacs were different from People diſeaſed. That our Saviour might, conſiſtently with his Character, go to a Marriage. No indecency in our Lord's Reply to his Mother. That the Prophecies in the* Old Teſtament *are miſapplied in the* New. *St.* Matthew's *Manner of introducing his Quotations. Who thoſe Wiſemen were; whence they came, and what the Star that conducted them was: How the Wiſemen came to underſtand what the Star meant. The* Bethlehem *Maſſacre no Reflection on Providence. Our Lord's Diſcovery of himſelf to the* Samaritan *Woman accounted for.*

IT is objected, by ſome Authors, that Men take Matters upon Content, and read Hiſtories without ever examining into them, may perhaps imagine, that the *Evangeliſts* have given us a fair Account of our Saviour's Doctrine and Miracles, without incurring any of the Abſurdities or Inconſiſtencies, that are ſo manifeſt in other Writers; but if we take a near Inſpection of the Books that have deſcended to us under their Names, we

A. Tongelowe fecit

Our Saviour cast a Devil out of a dumb Man, who there upon recover'd his Speech Matt. 9. 33

we ſhall find them relating ſuch incredible Stories, ſo frequently miſtaken in Matters of Fact, ſo generally miſapplying Paſſages in the Prophets, ſo inconſiſtent with themſelves, and ſo contradictory to one another, that ſome of the Objections which *Jewiſh* or *Heathen* Infidels have advanced againſt them, have not been thought groundleſs or inſignificant.

For what a lamentable Thing is it, that the two *Evangeliſts*, *Matthew* and *Luke*, in deducing our Saviour's Lineage, ſhould, almoſt in every Article, diſagree and thwart one another; or (were it poſſible to reconcile them) that they ſhould both make their Pedigrees terminate in *Joſeph*, who was no more than the reputed Father of *Jeſus*, and not in *Jeſus* himſelf, as born of the Virgin *Mary*, from whom alone he had his human Nature, and whoſe Genealogy, in this Caſe, was only to be regarded? What a plain Contradiction is it, that St. *Matthew* ſhould introduce our Lord as affirming to his Diſciples, that *Elias* was already come in the Perſon of *John the Baptiſt*; and *John* put it in the Mouth of the *Baptiſt* to aſſert the very contrary, which he certainly would not have done, had he been the Perſon predicted by the Prophet? And what a ſad Miſtake in Point of Chronology, that St. *Luke* ſhould make the Taxation, appointed by *Auguſtus*, which happened before our Saviour's Birth, fall out when *Cyrenius* was Governor of *Syria*, tho' (according to the Account of all other Hiſtorians) he did not ſucceed *Quintillius Varus*, in that Government, till about twelve Years after.

Iſaiah makes mention, indeed, of a Virgin's conceiving and bearing a Son, which St. *Matthew* has applied to the Conception and Birth of our Bleſſed

Saviour; but as the Word *Alma*, uſed by the Prophet, does not neceſſarily denote a *Virgin*, but ſometimes a *young Woman* that has had Knowledge of Man; there is Reaſon to believe that it ſhould bear this Signification, when referred to the Mother of *Jeſus*, becauſe it is difficult to imagine, how a Woman ſhould conceive and bear a Son, and ſtill preſerve her Virginity. And, indeed, if this be not the proper Acceptation of the Word, we can hardly aſſign any Reaſon why our Saviour ſhould make choice of a Woman to be his Mother, who was betrothed and married to a Man, rather than a pure Virgin, who had no ſuch Engagements upon her.

Whoever looks into the Writings of the Prophets, muſt obſerve, that all along, down from the Time of *David*, the *Meſſiah* is foretold, under the Character of a very powerful Prince, who was to reign *over the Houſe of* Jacob *for ever*; and therefore it is abſurd to put the Son of *Mary* (who was born meanly, lived poorly, and died ignominiouſly) upon the World, for that Perſon, who is repreſented as one of the moſt glorious Kings that ever was, or ever ſhall be in the Univerſe. It is abſurd to tell us, that the *Fullneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily*, and yet to relate the Story of the Deſcent of the Holy Spirit upon him, unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that this Acceſſion of the Third Perſon in the Trinity, could enable him to do more than the Divinity, which always reſided in him: But much more abſurd is it, upon the like Suppoſition, to talk of his being tempted by the Devil, when the Devil, if he knew him, would not have dared to do it; and if he did not, the Divinity, wherewith he was armed, muſt have made

made him impregnable to all his Aſſaults; ſo that the only End of this Tranſaction muſt have been to ſhew, that God was able to ſuſtain and overcome the the Temptations of the Devil.

Miracles are generally ſuppoſed to be the Manifeſtation of this Divinity reſiding in our Saviour, and the curing the *Demoniacks* is always accounted one of the greateſt of this Kind; but as it is difficult to aſſign any Reaſon, why *Dæmons*, at this Time were more numerous in *Judea*, than in any Country we ever read of; we have Reaſon to think, that the Perſons repreſented in the *New Teſtament* as *Demoniacks*, were only ſuch, as were afflicted with ſtrange Diſeaſes, *Fits of the Mother*, *Convulſions*, *Falling-ſickneſs*, and the like; which the ſacred Penmen (according to the Idiom of the *Hebrew* Language) expreſs in this awful Manner.

The firſt Miracle that our Saviour did, was his turning Water into Wine at a Marriage-Feaſt; but how he, who is all along repreſented as a very grave and ſedate Perſon, ſhould vouchſafe his Preſence at a Wedding, which is uſually a Scene of Levities and Exceſs; how he came to give his Mother ſo rough and undutiful an Anſwer, that Interpreters have been at ſome Trouble to put a tolerable Conſtruction upon it; and, above all, how he came to ſupply the Company, which had already drank enough, with ſuch a large Quantity of Wine, as almoſt denotes him an Encouager of Intemperance, are Points that the *Evangeliſts* have left to the perverſe Conjectures of Unbelievers.

The Completion of Prophecies, in the Perſon and Actions of our bleſſed Lord, is certainly a ſtrong Evidence of his being the *Meſſiah*; but in the Application which the *Evangeliſts* make in

ſeveral of theſe, their Scope is commonly ſo perverted, their Words ſo corrupted, and their Senſe ſo wreſted from its plain and obvious Meaning, ſuch Shreds and looſe Sentences are culled out for this Purpoſe, as have no manner of Relation to the *Meſſiah*, but ſuch as have received their Completion in ſome other Perſon, many Ages before; and, upon every Pinch, ſuch figurative and myſtical Interpretations, as quite expound away the true Importance of the Prophecies, are fled to for Shelter, that all that the Goſpel-Writers ſeem to have done upon this Head, is only to impoſe upon the World by a parcel of Citations and Applications of Prophecies, which, upon Examination, will be found nothing to the Purpoſe.

St. *Matthew*, for Inſtance, (to name one *Evangeliſt* for all) having given an Account of the Conception of the Virgin *Mary*, and the Birth of the Virgin *Mary*, and the Birth of *Jeſus* informs us, *That all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was ſpoken by the Prophet, ſaying, Behold a Virgin ſhall be with Child, and ſhall bring forth a Son, and thou ſhalt call his Name* Immanuel! but the Words, as they ſtand in *Iſaiah*, relate to a young Woman in the Days of *Ahaz*, as appears by their Context, and cannot, in any tolerable Conſtruction, have Relation to the Birth of our Saviour, whoſe Name was not *Immanuel*, but *Jeſus*.

The ſame *Evangeliſt* informs us, that *Jeſus* was carried into *Egypt*, from whence he returned after the Death of *Herod*, *that it might be fulfilled, which was ſpoken of the Lord by the Prophet*, OUT OF EGYPT HAVE I CALLED MY SON, which Words are no where to be found, but in the Prophet *Hoſea*, and yet, according to their plain and

and obvious Senſe, they are no Prophecy, but relate to a paſt Action, *viz.* the conducting the Children of *Iſrael* out of the Land of *Egypt*.

Again, the ſame *Evangeliſt* having given us the Account of the Slaughter of the Children in *Bethlehem*, and in the Coaſts thereof, immediately ſubjoins, that *then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by* Jeremiah *the Prophet, ſaying, in* Rama *was there a Voice heard, Lamentation and Weeping, and great Mourning*; Rachel *weeping for her Children, and would not be comforted, becauſe they are not*: Whereas it is plain, from the Context, that this Lamentation, in its primary Senſe, does not relate to the Maſſacre of the Children in *Bethlehem*, but to the ten Tribes being carried away into Captivity, and cannot, without manifeſt Violence, be applied to the other.

Once more the ſame *Evangeliſt*, having given us a ſhort Account of the Return and Settlement of our Lord's Parents, in the City of *Nazareth*, acquaints us farther, that the Reaſon of their doing ſo was, *that it might be fulfilled which is ſpoken by the Prophet*, HE SHALL BE CALLED A NAZARENE, which is directly forging a Quotation upon us, becauſe there is no one of the Prophets, that ever ſaid or wrote any ſuch Thing. They no where tell us, that the *Meſſiah* was to dwell at *Nazareth*, nor can his dwelling at *Nazareth*, (ſuppoſing they did) be any Ground for his being called a *Nazarene*.

The Place foretold by the Prophet, for his Birth and Habitation, was *Bethlehem*, and thither the Wiſemen were directed to repair; but now, what Sort of Perſons, theſe Wiſemen were, and from what Part of the World they came, what Kind of Star that was, which conducted them, and how they

they could know that it portended the *Birth of the King of the* Jews; how the Juſtice and Mercy of God can be aſſoiled, in ſuffering ſo many harmleſs Babes to be maſſacred at *Bethlehem*, upon the Account of *Chriſt*, or how *Chriſt*'s Conduct may be accounted for, in diſcovering himſelf ſo freely to the *Samaritan* Woman, when he had all along given ſuch ſtrict Charge to the Apoſtles to conceal what they knew of his being the *Meſſiah* und *Son of God*; theſe, and ſome others Points in this Period, the *Evangeliſts* have given us no manner of Satisfaction in, and have therefore left us at large, either to form Conjectures of our own, or to call in Queſtion the Truth of their Narrations.

That the *Evangeliſts* were Perſons of too much Probity to deal in Lies, and cunningly deviſed Fables, is evident from their Writings, wherein we find not only the ſtricteſt Prohibitions againſt Guile and Diſſimulation, both in Words and Deeds, but ſuch evident Tokens of their Simplicity and godly Sincerity, as ſhew that they would not be prevailed upon to conceal Truth, even tho' it might tend to their laſting Diſhonour. For, let any one tell me, how they can be ſuppoſed capable of forging any Thing for the Advancement of their Cauſe, who have not been wanting to record the Obſcurity of their Maſter's Birth and and Life, the Poverty and Reproaches he endured in his Miniſtry, the Ignominity of his Paſſion and Death, and the Terrors and Agonies of his Mind upon the Approach of them; nay, who have not diſſembled their own Faults and Failings, their mean Extraction and Employments, their Ignorance and Miſtakes, their cowardly Deſertation of their Lord, and many unſucceſsful Attempts to convert others by their preaching. Men

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that were thus frank and open in their Proceedings, could never deſignedly palm any Falſhoods upon the World, and if they were miſtaken in ſome Paſſages, it muſt be eſteemed their Misfortune, not their Crime.

They were, indeed, illiterate Men all, except St. *Luke*, and brought up in mean Employments; ſo very mean, that we cannot ſuppoſe them capable of writing a regular Hiſtory of any Kind, had they not been directed in it by the Spirit of Truth; but then to frame ſuch an excellent Syſtem of Morality, as is contained in the Goſpels; to give ſuch an extraordinary Account of the Satisfaction for Sin, and of the Nature and Office of a Mediator, to feign the Life and Actions of a *Meſſiah*, which ſhould agree ſo exactly with the Predictions of the Prophets, and the Types and Prefigurations of the Moſaic Law, this they were no more able to do, without the Aſſiſtance of the ſame Divine Spirit, than they were to create a World: And yet, notwithſtanding the great Variety, and Difficulty of this Province, it is wonderful to obſerve, how all the four Evangeliſts, who wrote at different Times, and in different Places, agree, not only on the main Topicks, but ſometimes in the moſt minute Circumſtances, inſomuch that whenever they ſeem to diſagree (which chiefly ariſes from their not confining themſelves to the ſame Words, or the ſame Order of Time) it looks, as if the Spirit of God deſigned on purpoſe that it ſhould be ſo, not only that they might be diſtinct Witneſſes of the ſame Things, but that all ſucceeding Ages of the Chriſtian World might ſee with their Eyes, that they had neither tranſcribed from one another, nor combined together like crafty Knaves.

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The Truth is, tho' the *Evangeliſts* no where contradict themſelves, or one another, yet they were not ſo ſollicitous to prevent their being ſuſpected of doing ſo by injudicious and raſh Men, as they would have been, had they recorded any Thing but Truth; becauſe it is ſuitable to the Simplicity of Truth, not to be over-nice and curious about every Punctilio, and ſmaller Circumſtance (as the Manner of Falſhood is) but to ſpeak fully and intelligibly, and then leave it to Men whether they will believe or not. Inſtead of criticizing therefore upon ſome difficult Parts of the evangelical Writers, we ought to conſider their whole Deſign, Method and Contrivance; and if in theſe we find them rational and uniform, the common Candor of Mankind will hinder us from thinking them capable of any groſs Miſtakes or Inconſiſtences, and where we perceive the Appearance of any ſuch, put us upon the charitable Office of adjuſting and reconciling them.

There is, indeed, a great and uncommon Difference between St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, in their Genealogies of our Saviour; but to accommodate this, we may obſerve, Firſt, That theſe two *Evangeliſts* were Men of different Nations, and, in that Reſpect, had different Deſigns. For St. *Matthew* was by Birth a *Jew*, wrote his Goſpel for the Benefit of the *Jewiſh* Converts; and wrote it, very probably, in their Language; and as he adhered to the received Cuſtom of the *Jews*, in this Matter of Genealogy, he began his Deduction no higher than *Abraham* the Father of the *Hebrews*; but St. *Luke* was a *Gentile*, and may truly be called the *Evangeliſt*, as St. *Paul* was he Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*; and therefore when he comes to relate the Pedigree of *Jeſus*, he takes a different

different Method, and carries it up as far as *Adam*, the Father of Mankind.

Secondly, We may obſerve likewiſe, that St. *Matthew* intends only to ſet down our Lord's political or royal Pedigree, by which he had a Right to the Crown of the *Jews*, but St. *Luke* ſhews his natural Deſcent through the ſeveral Succeſſions of thoſe from whom he took Fleſh and Blood: And to this Purpoſe we find St. *Matthew* (as we ſaid juſt now) beginning his Reckoning only from *Abraham*, to whom the firſt Promiſe of the Kingdom was made, whereas St. *Luke* runs his Line up to *Adam*, the firſt Head and Fountain of human Nature, which plainly ſhews that the one deduced only his Title to the Crown, and the other the natural Deſcent of his Humanity.

That St. *Matthew* uſes the Word *begat* only in a political Senſe, is clear from hence, That he applies it to him, who had no Child, even to *Jeconiah*, of whom it is expreſly ſaid, *Jer.* xxii. 23. that God *wrote him childleſs*; whereupon, being depoſed by the King of *Babylon*, *Zedekiah*, his Uncle, was made King, and afterwards, upon the Removal of him likewiſe (there remaining no more of the Line of *Solomon*) *Salathiel* being next of Kin, was declared King of the *Jews*; which *Salathiel*, upon that Account, is ſaid, by St. *Matthew*, Chap. i. 12. to have been begotten by *Jeconiah*, not becauſe he was naturally his Son, but only illegally or politically ſo, as ſucceeding in the Kingdom during *Jeconiah*'s Captivity.

Thirdly, We may obſerve farther, that as *David* had ſeveral Sons by former Wives, ſo by *Berſheba* likewiſe he had three, beſides *Solomon*, whereof the eldeſt, next to him, was *Nathan*, and that *Chriſt* deſcended naturally from *David*, not by *Solomon*

lomon, but by *Nathan*; for, tho' it be frequently ſaid in Scripture, that the *Meſſiah*, ſhould ſpring from *David*, it is never ſaid that he ſhould deſcend from *Solomon*; for which Reaſon St. *Luke* only deduces *Nathan*'s Line, which came into the Poſſeſſion of the Throne (upon *Jeconiah*'s Captivity, and want of Iſſue) in the Perſon of *Salathiel*.

Fourthly, We may obſerve again, that the Crown of *Judah*, being now come into the Line of *Nathan*, in the Perſon of *Salathiel*, and after him, in the great and renowned *Zorobabel*; foraſmuch as the two *Evangeliſts* agree from *Jeconiah* to *Zorobabel*; and after him, divide (each aſcribing to him a different Succeſſor, *viz.* the former *Abiud*, and the latter *Rheſa*) we may rationally ſuppoſe, that theſe two were the Sons of *Zorobabel*, and that from *Abiud*, the elder Brother, lineally deſcended *Joſeph*, according to the Computation of St. *Matthew*, and from *Rheſa*, the younger Brother, deſcended *Mary*, of whom *Jeſus* was born, according to the Deſcription of St. *Luke*.

Fifthly, Once more we may obſerve, that it was a Cuſtom of the *Jews*, not to reckon the Women by Name in her Pedigree, but to reckon the Husband in Right of his Wife; for which Reaſon we are not to think it ſtrange, that we find *Joſeph* twice reckoned, firſt in his own Right, by St. *Matthew*, and then in his Wife *Mary*'s Right, by St. *Luke*: For it is certain, that *Mary* was properly the Daughter of *Eli*, and that *Joſeph*, who, in the Account, ſucceeds him, is ſo reckoned, not as his natural Son, but as his Son-in-law, inſtead of his Wife *Mary*, as the Manner of the *Jews* was: And accordingly it is remarked by ſome learned Men, that St. *Luke* does not ſay of *Joſeph*,

Joſeph, that he was the Son of *Eli*, but only he *was of* Eli, *i. e.* related to him, and belonging to his Family, as his Son-in-law. Fit, however, it was, that the Genealogy of *Jeſus* ſhould be deduced from *Joſeph*, becauſe it was ſo generally received by the *Jews*, that *Jeſus* was the Son of the Carpenter, the Son of *Joſeph*; ſo that if *Joſeph* had not been acknowledged to have been of the Tribe of *Judah*, and of the Family of *David*, ſince, according to the received Rule of the *Jews*, that *the Family of the Mother is not called a Family*, they would not have failed to have objected this, as a juſt Prejudice againſt all our Lord's Pretences of being the *Meſſiah*.

The Sum of theſe Obſervations, in ſhort is this, That the royal Line of *David*, by *Solomon*, being extinct in *Jeconiah*, the Crown and Kingdom paſſed into the next younger Line of *Nathan*, (another Son of *David*) in *Salathiel* and *Zorobabel*; this *Zorobabel* having two Sons, *Abiud* and *Rheſa*, the royal Dignity deſcended of Right upon the Line of *Abiud*, of which *Joſeph* was the laſt; and he marrying the Virgin *Mary*, who ſprung from the Line of *Rheſa*, the younger Son of *Zorobabel*, and (as ſome imagine) having no Iſſue himſelf, his Right paſſed into the Line of *Mary*, being next of Kin, and, by that Means, upon *Jeſus* her Son; ſo that he was both naturally the Son of *David*, and alſo legally the King of the *Jews*, the latter of which is accounted to us by St. *Matthew*, as the former is by St. *Luke*.

This ſeems to be a pretty clear Deduction of our *Saviour*'s Pedigree, and is capable of giving a fair Solution to a great many of thoſe Objections which ariſe from the different Names, or the unequal Numbers in the Names, or the unequal

Diſtances from each other, which are diſcernible in the two Genealogies. But, perhaps, Interpreters might ſave themſelves the Trouble of giving a Reaſon for ſeveral Difficulties occurring therein, by ſaying, that St. *Matthew* (concerning whom the main Diſpute is) recites his Account, as he found it in the authentick Copies of the *Jews*, who, doubtleſs, in every Family, had preſerved ſome known and approved *Genealogy* of their Deſcent from *Abraham*, the Father of their Nation, in whom they ſo much gloried, and from whoſe Loins they expected the promiſed *Meſſiah*.

That even in our Saviour's Time, the *Jews* had Genealogical Tables, wherein they kept an Account of their Families, and Tribes, is evident from what *Joſephus* ſays, *viz. That he gave the Succeſſion of his Family, as he found it written in the publick Books*; nor need we queſtion, but that the like or greater Care was employ'd to preſerve the Stems of the royal Family of *David*. Since then the *Jews*, who lived in the Time when the Goſpels were publiſhed (tho' exactly curious in Things of this Nature, and withal maliciouſly bent againſt *Chriſt* and *Chriſtianity*) never once endeavoured to invalidate the Account which theſe *Evangeliſts* give us; this ſeems to be a ſufficient Proof, that theſe Genealogies, when they firſt came abroad, were neither thought erroneous, nor inconſiſtent, but agreeable to the publick Records then in Uſe, and, if any Difficulties now ariſe in them, they are not to be attributed to any real and intrinſick Cauſe, but accidentally to the Ignorance of Interpreters, for want of proper Helps, at this Diſtance of Time, whereby to explain them.

It may ſeem a little incongruous, perhaps, that the *Baptiſt* ſhould deny what our *Saviour* confirms concerning him, *viz.* that he was the *Elias*, who was to be ſent before to make Preparations for his Coming; but in this there will be no manner of Contradiction, if it does but appear that the Affirmation of the one, and the Negation of the other proceed upon different Conſiderations. Now the State of the Matter is this, The *Jews*, at this Time, were in full Expectation of the *Meſſiah*, but then it was an univerſal Belief among them, that *Elias* ſhould appear before him, and that this Appearance ſhould be a certain Token of his coming: This Belief they founded upon the Prophecy of *Malachi*, *Behold I will ſend you* Elijah *the Prophet, before the Coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord*; but then they imagined, either that the Body of *Elijah* was preſerved in *Paradiſe*, and ſhould again appear upon the Earth at the Seaſon appointed or it, or that his Body being diſſolved, God would infuſe the Spirit of *Elijah* into a new one, created for that Purpoſe. When therefore the great Council at *Jeruſalem* ſent to enquire, whether he was, either the *Chriſt* or *Elias* now returned from Heaven? (as they imagined he was to do upon *Chriſt*'s Appearance) to this their Senſe of the Queſtion he replies, in expreſs Terms, That he was neither the one, nor the other. But this does not at all interfere with our Lord's affirming, that he was the Perſon foretold under the Name and Character of *Elias*, in the true Signification of *Malachi*'s Prophecy. He was not, indeed, the very *Elias*, who had lived in King *Ahab*'s Time, of whoſe ſecond Coming into the World, the *Sanhedrim* now enquired, according to their Miſconſtruction of that Prophecy; but, according to the

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true Conſtruction thereof, he was the Perſon, who came in the *Spirit and Power of* Elias, of whom *Elias* was a Type, and whoſe Temper and Manner of Life *Elias* much reſembled.

How uſual a Thing it is for Perſons who reſembled others in Qualities, Offices or Actions, to be deſcribed by the Names of thoſe whom they reſemble, no one can be ignorant, who is the leaſt acquainted, either with the Phraſe of Scripture, or with the common Forms of Speech. Thus the *Meſſias* is promiſed, by the Name of *David*, becauſe he was to be a King; *Zadok* the High-prieſt, and his Sons recorded by the Name of *Aaron*, and his Sons, by Reaſon of their Office; and among us, 'tis no uncommon Thing to call the *rich* Man, a *Cræſus*, the *wiſe* Man, a *Solomon*, the *Warrior*, a *Cæſar*, an *Alexander*, or the like; and where then, I pray, can be the Miſapplication, in our Saviour's calling the *Baptiſt* by the Name of *Elias*, when, in the Severity of his Life, his Zeal for God's Glory, his ſuffering Perſecution, his bold rebuking of Vice, his Reproofs of *Herod*, and the Hatred of his inceſtuous Queen, anſwerable to the Prophet's Chidings of *Ahab*, and the Malice of *Jezebel*, he ſo nearly reſembled the *Tiſhbite?* He was not, indeed, the real *Tiſhbite*, but, by the Anſwer which he returns to theſe *Delegates* from the *Sanhedrim*, *I am the Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, Make ſtrait the Way of the Lord*, &c. he plainly intimates, that he was the very Meſſenger promiſed in *Malachi*, and came to diſcharge the Office aſſigned to him in that Prophet. So far is *John*'s Anſwer from contradicting what our Lord aſſerts of him, that it is indeed a Confirmation of it.

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The better to underſtand the Nature of that Taxation which St. *Luke* refers us to, we muſt obſerve, that every fifth Year it was a cuſtomary Thing to take an Account of the Citizens of *Rome*, for which Purpoſe there were proper Officers appointed, who were called *Cenſors*; that their Buſineſs was to make a Regiſtration of all the *Roman* Citizens, their Wives and Children, with the Age, Qualities, Trades, Offices and Eſtates, both real and perſonal of them all; that *Auguſtus Cæſar* was the firſt that extended this to the Provinces, and three Times in his Reign, firſt in the twenty eighth Year before the *Chriſtian Æra*; ſecondly, in the eighth Year before, and thirdly, in the fourteenth Year after the *Chriſtian Æra*, cauſed the like Deſcription to be made of all the Provinces belonging to the *Roman* Empire; and that this ſecond Enrolment, which was in the eighth Year of the *vulgar Chriſtian Æra, i. e.* was three Years before that in which *Chriſt* was born, was the Deſcription to which St. *Luke* refers us.

Now, ſuppoſing the Execution of *Cæſar*'s Decree, in every Province of the *Roman* Empire, to be committed to the Governor of it; the carrying this Work through all the Countries that made up the Province of *Syria, viz.* thro' *Syria, Cœlo-ſyria, Phœnicia* and *Judea*, could not well take up leſs than the Space of three Years; for if *Joab* was nine Months and twenty Days in taking an Account only of the ten Tribes of *Iſrael*, and in them only of ſuch Perſons as were able to bear Arms, we cannot think it unreaſonable that the Execution of the Survey, which extended to all manner of Perſons, their Poſſeſſions, and Qualities, and other Circum-

Circumſtances, ſhould, in ſo large a Province, take up leſs than three Years.

It is to be obſerved farther, that tho' the Regiſtration was made at this Time, yet the Taxes thereupon were not paid, 'till *Judea* was made a a *Roman* Province, and *Publius Sulpitius Quirinus* (who in *Greek* is called *Cyrenius*) was made Governor of *Syria*; for before *Archelaus* was depoſed, the *Jews* paid their Taxes to their Princes, and their Princes paid their Tribute to the *Roman* Emperors; but when *Archelaus* was depoſed, and *Judea* made a *Roman* Provincé, the Tax was levy'd according to the Valuation, that was made eleven Years before.

Upon the Whole, therefore, it appears, that in this Affair there were two diſtinct particular Actions, done at two diſtinct particular Times, *viz. firſt*, the making of the Survey, and then the levying the Tax thereupon; ſo that, if what is ſaid in the firſt Verſe of the ſecond Chapter of St. *Luke*, be underſtood of the former of theſe, and what is ſaid in the ſecond Verſe only of the latter, this will remove all Difficulties, and reconcile that *Evangeliſt* with *Joſephus*; and that it is to be thus underſtood, we have the Opinion of many learned Interpreters.

The Truth is, this Levy of the Tax, (which was ſettled eleven Years before) in the Time, when *Cyrenius* was *Procurator* of *Syria*, was attended with ſo many Commotions and ſeditious Tumults, that the *Evangeliſt* thought he could not make mention of its being decreed, without giving ſome Hint of the Manner of its being executed: And therefore he puts it in by way of Parentheſis, that *this Taxing was firſt made*, (*i. e.* firſt put

put in Execution) *when* Cyrenius *was Governor of* Syria.

The Account which *Joſephus* gives us of this Matter, is this,——"*Cyrenius* at this Time, *ſays he*, was ſent Governor by *Cæſar* into *Syria*. He was a Man of eminent Fame, a *Roman* Senator, and one that had paſſed through all the Degrees and Offices of Honour up to the Dignity of a Conſul. *Coponius*, who commanded the Horſe, went along with him as Governor of *Judea*; but *Judea* being already annexed to *Syria*, it was *Cyrenius*'s Province to tax and ſeſs the *Jews*, and to make Seizure of the Moneys and Moveables of *Archelaus*. The *Jews* grumbled at this Way of aſſeſſing at firſt, but, through the Perſuaſion and Authority of the High-prieſt, *Joazar*, the Son of *Boethus*, they were perſuaded to ſubmit, and comply, without any farther Trouble; until one *Judas*, a *Gaulanite*, of the City of *Gamala*, together with one *Sadducus*, a *Phariſee*, inveigled the People into a Revolt. *Taxes*, they ſaid, *were only Marks of Slavery, and therefore the whole Nation ſhould do well to ſtand up for an univerſal Liberty, and one lucky Hit would make them free and eaſy for ever, and advance them in their Reputation, as well as ſecure them in their Poſſeſſions.* This was enough to put the Multitude in Tune for any ſort of Miſchief; nor is to be expreſſed the Havock theſe turbulent Incendiaries made in the Nation, and what Murders, Robberies, and Depredations, without Diſtinction of Friend or Foe, they committed, under the Pretence of advancing the common Good of *Liberty* and *Property*, when nothing, but Paſſion and private Intereſt, was at the Bottom."

There is a Paſſage indeed in the Prophet *Iſaiah*,

which St. *Matthew* applies to the Birth of *Jeſus*, yet, according to the Context, it ſeems, at firſt ſight, to have a more immediate Reference to another Event; but let us examine the Hiſtory from whence it is taken. In the Days of *Ahaz* King of *Judah*, (and probably in the ſecond or third Year of his Reign) *Rezin*, King of *Syria*, and *Pekah*, King of *Iſrael*, united their Forces to come againſt *Jeruſalem*, which put the King and his People in ſuch Conſternation, *that their Hearts were moved* (according to the Scripture Expreſſion) *as the Trees of the Wood are moved with the Wind.* Hereupon *Iſaiah* is commanded to take his little Son, *Shear-jaſhub*, with him, and to go, and meet *Ahaz*, in order to aſſure him, that the Deſign, formed againſt him by the two confederate Kings, ſhould not proſper. But, finding no Credence with the King, the Prophet undertakes to perform whatever Miracle he ſhould ask, in Confirmation of the Truth of what he had promiſed him; but *Ahaz* ſtill refuſing, out of a ſpecious Pretence of not being willing to tempt God, the Prophet turns from him, and addreſſing himſelf to the Nobles of the Royal Blood, *Hear ye now, O Houſe of* David, ſays he, *the Lord himſelf ſhall give you a Sign. Behold, a Virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a Son, and they ſhall call his Name* Immanuel.

Now, not to inſiſt upon the Original Word *Alma*, which (as learned Men have obſerved) ſignifies almoſt always, *a Virgin untainted by Man*, and which the *Greek* Tranſlators before *Chriſt* (who were not intereſted in the Controverſy, and yet knew the Signification of *Hebrew* Words much better than any Moderns can pretend to) have ſo rendered this Place; and not to inſiſt on the Tradition which prevailed among the *Jews*, not long before

before our Saviour's Appearing, *viz.* That the *Meſſiah* ſhould come into the World in ſuch an extraordinary Manner, that *no Man ſhould know whence he was*, and (as the *Talmud* expreſſes it) *that his Birth ſhould be as the Dew of the Lord, as Drops from the Graſs, expecting not the Labour*, or Action *of Men*; not to inſiſt on theſe Things, I ſay (tho' they make very much for *Chriſt*'s Title to the Prophecy) how can we imagine, that, after ſo pompous an Introduction, and ſo important a Name, the Prophet ſhould mean no more at laſt, by a Virgin's conceiving, than that a young Woman ſhould be with Child? What, does *Iſaiah* offer *Ahaz* a Miracle, *either in the Depth, or the Height above*, and when he ſeems to tell the Houſe of *David*, that God, of his own Accord, would perform a greater Work than they could ask, does he ſink to a Sign, that Nature produces every Day? Is that to be called a Wonder (which Word implies an uncommon, ſurprizing, and ſupernatural Event) which happens conſtantly by the ordinary Laws of Generation? How little does ſuch a Birth anſwer the ſolemn *Apparatus*, which the Prophet uſes, to raiſe their Expectation of ſome great Matter? *Hear ye, O Houſe of* David,—— *Behold, the Lord himſelf will give you a Sign*, worthy of himſelf, and what is it? Why, *a young married Woman ſhall be with Child.* How ridiculous muſt ſuch a Diſcovery make the Prophet, and how highly muſt it enrage the Audience, to hear a Man, at ſuch a Juncture as this, begin an idle and impertinent Tale, which ſeems to banter and inſult their Miſery, rather than adminiſter any Conſolation under it.

Alma comes from an *Hebrew* Word, which ſignifies *to hide*, and very fitly agrees with the Cuſ-

tom of the *Eaſtern* Countries, who were wont to keep their Daughters, while they were in their Virginity, from all Company and publick Converſation and Interviews. Thus it is ſaid, upon a publick and extraordinary Conſternation, that *the Virgins, who were kept in, ran, ſome to the Gates, and ſome to the Walls, and others looked out of the Windows*, 2 *Maccab.* iii. 19. But there is another and more proper Signification, which, from the ſame Word, that ſignifies to *hide* or *cover*, this *Alma* will bear, *viz.* as it denotes one, who has not known Man, or, according to the Scripture Phraſe, one, whoſe *Nakedneſs* has not been *uncovered*. The Knowledge of a Woman is expreſſed in the Law of *Moſes* by *uncovering her Nakedneſs*; and, agreeably hereunto, *Alma* is a moſt proper Word for a Virgin, who is covered, and whoſe Nakedneſs was never uncovered, or revealed by the Knowledge of Man. This Account is perfectly agreeable to the *Hebrew* Manner of Speech, and to the Style of the Law of *Moſes*. But this is not all, as ſeveral learned Men have ſhewn, that there is a great Affinity between the *Hebrew* and *Punick* Language, this makes the Words of St. *Jerome* more remarkable: *In the* Punick *Language, which is ſaid to be derived from the* Hebrew, *ſhe, who is properly a Virgin, is called* Alma: Eſpecially conſidering, that St. *Matthew* renders it by the Word *Parthenos*, which ſignifies a *Virgin* properly ſo called, the very ſame Word, that the *Septuagint* Interpreters made uſe of, about three hundred Years before St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel, and, conſequently, long enough before this Controverſy aroſe between *Jews* and *Chriſtians*.

But of what Uſe or Conſolation could the future Birth of the *Meſſiah* be to the Houſe of *David* at that

that Time? Of very great Uſe, without all Doubt; for it aſſured them of the Truth of God's Promiſe, in that he would not ſuffer them to be deſtroyed, nor *the Scepter to depart from* Judah, until the *Meſſiah* came. It aſſured them of his Almighty Power, in that he could create a new Thing in the Earth, by making a Virgin conceive, and thereby ſhew himſelf able to deliver them from their moſt potent Enemies; and it aſſured them likewiſe of his peculiar Favour, in that he had decreed the *Meſſiah* ſhould deſcend from their Family; ſo that the People, to whom he had vouchſafed ſo high a Dignity, might depend upon his Protection, and, under the Shadow of his Wings, think themſelves ſecure. In ſhort, God had promiſed the *Meſſiah* ſhould ſpring from the Tribe of *Judah*, and from the Family of *David*, even while that Tribe, and that Family continued a Polity undeſtroyed; and therefore, ſince that Promiſe was not yet abſolved, nor the *Meſſiah* as yet come, there was no fear of the Extinction of *Judah*, and the *Houſe of David*, at that Time, whatever their preſent Diſtreſs might be; but, as God's Promiſes were immutable, they had all Manner of Reaſon to believe, that the Enemies now combin'd againſt them, would by ſome Turn of Providence or other, be diſappointed in their Deſign.

Thus one great Prophecy, at leaſt, in the *Old*, as well as ſundry Promiſes in the *New Teſtament*, made it a Thing neceſſary, that when the Son of God came to be incarnate, he ſhould be born of a pure and immaculate Virgin; and it is impious to diſpute the Poſſibility of the Thing, when God Almighty was the Agent of it; but why this Virgin ſhould be married, rather than a ſingle Woman,

Woman, is the other Queſtion we are to reſolve.

And, in order to do this, we muſt obſerve, that by this Means, *Mary*'s Genealogy, not only by her Father's Side, (which St. *Luke* has recorded) but by her Husband's likewiſe (which St. *Matthew* has done) came to be deduced; and ſo we have a double Teſtimony, that ſhe ſprung from the Seed of *David*, and, according to the Promiſes of old, was the true Mother of the *Meſſiah*; that, by this Means we have the Teſtimony of her Husband *Joſeph*, concerning her Virginity, who was not a little uneaſy in his Mind, before he had Satisfaction given him by the Angel, and might, poſſibly, have been the firſt that would have blaſted her Reputation, had he not been fully convinced of her Innocence and Modeſty; that, by this Means, our Lord's Birth was ſecured againſt all Imputation of Spurioufneſs, and his Mother's Character protected from the Perſecution of opprobious Tongues, which ſhe muſt have endured, (if not the Cenſure of the Law) and brought, withal, a perpetual Scandal upon her Family, had not her Pregnancy, by the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, been concealed under the Umbrage of a common Husband; and that, by this Means, our Lord was provided with a Guardian in his Childhood and Minority, and his Mother with a Companion in her Journey, ſhe was ſhortly to take, from *Nazareth* to *Bethany*, and from thence into *Egypt*, and both of them with a Supporter, who, by honeſt Labour in his proper Occupation, might provide them with Neceſſaries of Life.

Theſe, and ſeveral other Reaſons might be aſſigned for our Lord's chuſing to be born of a Virgin, that went under the Notion of being married;

ried; but how he came to be a Man of Poverty and Affliction, to live meanly, and die ignominiouſly, when (had he been the true *Meſſiah*) he muſt, according to the Repreſentations made of him, in the Prophets, have appeared as one of the greateſt Monarchs in the World. This is the grand Objection of the *Jews*, and therefore, to give it a proper Solution, it ought to be conſidered that the *Meſſiah*, in order to accompliſh the Prophecies concerning him, was to ſuſtain three different Characters; for he was to be a Prophet and a Prieſt, as well as a King. The Predictions, indeed, which refer to his kingly Office, are more in Number, and enlarged upon more copiouſly, than either of the other; yet both the others are ſo eſſential to the Character of the *Meſſiah*, that, had any one of theſe been wanting in him, the Scheme of Man's Redemption had been broken and imperfect: And yet it is certain, that theſe three Offices require Operations, not only diſtinct, and peculiar to each, but ſuch as could not equally be exerciſed, at one and the ſame Time, by one and the ſame Perſon.

As a Prophet, the *Meſſiah* was not only to teach and inſtruct his People, but to undergo the common Fate of Prophets, in being deſpiſed, contradicted, perſecuted, and bearing Teſtimony of the Truth of his Doctrine, by the Example of his ſuffering for it. As a Prieſt, he was to make Sacrifice for the Sins of his People, which, in this Caſe, could not be otherwiſe done, than by offering his own Blood, and, conſequently, dying in their Stead. Now, both theſe, in the Courſe of Things appointed by God, were to go before the Entrance upon his kingly Office, becauſe the Prophe-

Prophecies mention the laſt, as a Recompence for the faithful Diſcharge of the other two. This is a Matter that both the royal and evangelical Prophet expreſs ſo very plainly, that St. Paul, in Effect, does but expound thoſe Paſſages, when he tells the *Hebrews*, that *Jeſus, for the ſuffering of Death, was crowned with Glory and Honour*; and the *Philippians*, that *for his taking upon him the Form of a Servant, and becoming obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs, God had highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name*, &c. Since, therefore, his regal Office was not to commence, till after he had accompliſhed his other two, to complain that his kingly Power was not exerciſed at his firſt coming, is to miſunderſtand the Prophecies, and confound the Order of *Events*: 'Tis to expect a full Accompliſhment of Predictions, within a very narrow Space, that ſtrictly belong to an Office. ſtill in exerciſe, and to which the Scripture ſays, *there ſhall be no End.*

2. It is to be obſerved farther, that the Stile and Manner of Prophets, eſpecially when they treat of Subjects uncommon, ſublime and ſpiritual, abound with figurative Schemes of Speech, and ſuch pompous and bold Metaphors and Deſcriptions, taken from ſenſible Objects, as awaken in our Minds, the moſt lofty Imaginations we are capable of. This the *Jews* themſelves make no Difficulty to allow, and ſome of their greateſt Doctors have laid it down for a Rule, in the Interpretation of the Prophets, that in many Places they are not literally to be underſtood, by Reaſon of thoſe metaphorical Expreſſions, whoſe true Intent is to repreſent Things according to our Capacity,

pacity, by Images familiar to our Senſes. If therefore moſt of theſe great and pompous Things, that are ſaid in the Prophets, concerning the glorious Reign of the *Meſſiah*, may be underſtood of the ſpiritual Benefits which we have received by his coming, ſuch as the Graces of our Regeneration and Sanctification, the Wiſdom of his Laws, the Comforts of his Ordinances, the holy and peaceable Temper, which his Goſpel inſpires, the large Extent of its Propagation, and the bleſſed Effects, which, in all Places, where it is ſincerely believed and practiſed, it produces: If Things be reduced to this Senſe, I ſay, I cannot ſee, but that the Character of a powerful Prince has been fulfilled in our Saviour already; for what King was ever ſo proſperous as he, who, by the Propagation of his Goſpel, has enlarged his Dominions ſo wonderfully over the moſt diſtant Regions of the habitable World? Or what Conqueſt was ever ſo glorious as that which he hath gained over the Errors and Prejudices, the Luſts and Paſſions of wicked and miſtaken Men, nay, even over all the Powers of Darkneſs, and Sin, and Death and Hell?

But be it granted (as ſeems, indeed, very probable) that ſeveral Paſſages in the Prophets relate to the temporal Greatneſs, Proſperity and Peace that ſhall attend the Government of the *Meſſiah*, yet we are to conſider,

3. That, before the Conſummation of all Things, there will be an Enlargement of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom, even here upon Earth. For though he has all Power *both in Heaven and Earth*, already veſted in the human Nature, united with his own divine Perſon, yet is not that Power ſo viſibly and

fully executed, as it ſhall one Day be; nor are all thoſe glorious Effects as yet accompliſhed, which the Prophets foretold, when deſcribing the victorious and peaceable, the unlimited and everlaſting Dominion of the *Meſſiah*. The enlightning of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by bringing ſuch Multitudes of the one, and ſo many Nations of the other Sort, to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, are already a partial Completion of the Prophecies; but there is ſtill a nobler in reſerve, when the Fulneſs of both ſhall come in. He reigns now actually in the Hearts of Men, and ſubdues the moſt formidable of our Enemies, by the Holineſs of his Laws, and the mighty Operations of his Grace; but that his Dominion and Conqueſt will be much more abſolute, when the Time comes for every Enemy to be utterly deſtroyed. Though therefore the whole be not, yet abundantly enough has already been fulfilled, to make us acquieſce in a ſtedfaſt Aſſurance, that what is ſtill behind will moſt certainly come to paſs. For, ſure, how meanly ſoever they, that conſider Things imperfectly, may think of a deſpiſed and crucified Man, yet there is nothing ſo glorioufly great, that may not moſt reaſonably be expected, from that very Man, when *declared to be the* Son of God *with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs, by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

It is made a ſtrong Objection, by the *Socinians*, againſt our *Saviour*'s being the Son of God, that, at the Time of his Baptiſm, the Holy Ghoſt deſcended upon him, for which there had been no manner of Occaſion, ſay they, had the Divinity (which was certainly no leſs powerful than the Holy Ghoſt) being perſonally united to him.

While

While our bleſſed Saviour was diſcourſing concerning his approaching Death, a Voice from Heaven was heard ſpeaking unto him, he told the People (who ſeemed to be divided in their Opinions of it) *John* xi. 30. *This Voice came not becauſe of me*, i. e. to ſatisfy me of the divine Favour, or to comfort me againſt the Agonies of Death, *but for your Sake*, that ye might believe in me: And, in like manner, it might be a ſufficient Anſwer to this Objection, that this viſible Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, upon our *Saviour*, *was not for his Sake*, or to convey any Virtue or Power; that he was not equally poſſeſſed of by the divine Nature that reſided in him, but for the ſake of the *Baptiſt*, and thoſe that were then preſent with him, even to inform them of the Excellency of his Perſon, and his divine Miſſion: For ſo the Voice, which immediately follows the Prodigy, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, Matth. iii. 17. *Hear ye him*, Chap. xvii. 5. plainly ſhews, that this whole Tranſaction was deſigned for the Inſtruction of all the Company. Our Saviour, indeed, was now entering upon his prophetic Office, and fit it was, that the World ſhould have ſome previous Notice of it, before he came to open his Commiſſion. When he came to offer himſelf to *John*, for Baptiſm, *John*, indeed, by ſome ſudden Inſpiration, knew him, but he had not, as yet, made any public Declaration of that Knowledge; and therefore God took care to give the Company this glorious Manifeſtation of his being his Son, a Perſon ſanctified by this Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, to declare his Will to the World, according to the Prophecy concerning him, and whoſe Words and Doctrine it therefore concerned all Men to hear and obey.

Our bleſſed Saviour, indeed, as he was God, had no need of this Unction of the Holy Spirit, but as he was to execute the prophetick Office, it was expedient for him to have it: For, as a Prophet is not to ſpeak in his own Name, but in the Name of God, and what he has ſuggeſted to him, by the Spirit of God; ſo this prophetical Office was to be performed, not by the divine Nature of our Lord, but by the Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit. *We muſt therefore* (as Dr. *Lightfoot* ſays) *diſtinguiſh between the Excellencies and Perfections of* Chriſt, *which flowed from the Donation and Anointing of the Holy Spirit. From the hypoſtatical Union of the Natures flowed the infinite Dignity of his Perſon, his Self-ſufficient to fulfil the Law, and ſatisfy the divine Juſtice; as from the Anointing of the Spirit flowed his Knowledge of all evangelical Myſteries. the Doctrines and Precepts which he delivered in his Father's Name, and the many miraculous Works which he did in Confirmation of his Miſſion and Doctrine.* For this is plain to every one, that looks into the Goſpels, that almoſt in every Page, our Saviour owns his Miſſion from God; that the Doctrines which he taught were not his own, but God's; that they were all dictated by the Spirit of God; and that the Miracles which he exhibited, in Teſtimony of theſe, proceeded from the ſame Spirit of God. Upon the Whole, therefore, we may conclude, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, being now in a State of Humiliation, and emptied of the Form of God, acted, in Things relating immediately to his prophetick Office, not as God, but only as a Prophet ſent from God; not by the Power of his divine Nature, but of that Spirit by which he was anointed and ſanctified to that Office; tho' (notwithſtanding this Quieſcence in the Deity) being

being ſtill God, of the ſame Eſſence derived from the Father, he might do many other Things by Virtue of his Divinity; ſuch as diſcerning the Hearts of Men, walking upon the Sea, and ſtilling the ſtormy Winds with a Word, &c. And as this Divinity was part of the Doctrine he was to publiſh, he might, without any Contradiction to himſelf, aſſert that God was *properly his Father*, and he *properly* his Son; that *he and his Father was one*, and *that all Men were to worſhip the Son, even as they worſhipped the Father.*

Something of the like Nature is to be ſaid in Relation to our Saviour's being tempted by the Devil, *viz.* that, though his Divinity did ſet him far above the utmoſt Oppoſition of any created Being, yet did not that Divinity exert itſelf upon all Occaſions, but ſometimes ſuſpended its Operations, and was quieſcent, as we ſaid before. That the Divinity was thus quieſcent in *Chriſt*, until he entered upon the publick Exerciſe of his prophetic Office, is generally thought by moſt Orthodox Divines; that, in all the Actions, relating to the Execution of that Office, it ceaſed in the like Manner to act, we have juſt now endeavoured to prove; and it is generally thought, that this was the Caſe of his Temptation by the Devil, in which his divine Perfections lying by, as it were, and forbearing to engage, he is to be conſidered abſtractly, as a Man. For fit it was, that he (who, for this very Reaſon, perhaps, is called the *ſecond Adam*) ſhould overcome the great Enemy of Mankind, in that very Nature alone and unaſſiſted, wherein the *firſt Adam* was ſo miſerably foiled.

Whether the Devil might know, that our Saviour was in Reality the Son of God, or only ſome peculiar

peculiar Favourite of his, Divines are at a ſtand to determine. 'Tis the Obſervation of *Origen*, that *all the while that our Saviour was under the Temptation, he never confeſſed himſelf to be the Son of God:* And *Therefore, ſince the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel* (ſays our Dr. *Jenkin*) *was not fully and perfectly underſtood by good Angels, but gradually manifeſted to them; it is no Wonder, that the Devil ſhould be ignorant of the Myſteries of the Goſpel, particularly that great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God's Manifeſtation in the Fleſh:* And therefore ſeeing our Saviour, after he had been declared the Son of God, in the Wilderneſs, for ſo long Time, with wild Beaſts, and hungry without any Food to ſuſtain him, he might begin to doubt, whether he was, indeed, the Son of God, in the moſt proper and higheſt Senſe of the Words, and thereupon be incited to aſſail him. But if even he knew never ſo well, as we can hardly ſuſpect him guilty of too much Modeſty, and, upon that Score, of any great Shyneſs to attack a God incarnate. Such is his inveterate Malice, we know, that it hath often prevailed with him to attempt Things very fooliſh and impoſſible. For what could be more ſo, than for a Creature to attempt to be like God, or to annul the Truth of the Prophecies concerning *Chriſt*? What could be more pernicious to him, than the Death of the *Lord of Life*, for the Redemption of Mankind, and yet this he attempted with the utmoſt Eagerneſs, and by ſetting all his Inſtruments to work, tho' it was impoſſible for our Lord to be held under the Power of Death? What ever *Satan* therefore might conceive of *Chriſt*, (as *Petavius* retorts the Argument upon the Head of *Crellius*) he could not but certainly know, from the Scriptures, that he was to

to be the Redeemer of Mankind, and the Author of their Salvation; that he was *the Seed of the Woman, who was to bruiſe his Head, and ſit on the Throne of his Father* David, *and there rule for ever:* And therefore, knowing all this, he could believe that he was able to reſerve both the Decrees and Oath of God. Whether therefore the Devil knew, or knew not our Saviour, it may well be deemed an Infatuation in him, to think of being able to pervert him, as he had done our firſt Parents, in their Obedience to God; but then it was far from being a fooliſh or unneceſſary Thing, for our Lord thus to ſuffer himſelf to be tempted, ſince thereby he hath inſtructed us that not any, the beſt and moſt exalted Degree of Virtue, ſets Men above Temptations; and ſince thereby he has encouraged us to hope for his Aſſiſtance and Support under the like Circumſtances; both becauſe, *Heb.* ii. 18. *himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted*, and becauſe Chap. iv. 15. *he was, in all Points tempted like as we are, he cannot but be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities.* Theſe were the true Ends and Reaſons why our Saviour ſuffered Temptation; and the proper and natural Inference from hence is, that which the ſame Author to the *Hebrews* makes, *Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us, in the Time of Need.*

There are few Things wherein Mankind ſeem to be more agreed, than in the Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Miracles, as an authentick and indiſputable Teſtimony, that the Perſons entruſted with ſuch Power, were employed by God; becauſe the conſtant Apprehenſions, which both Reaſon and Revelation have given us of God, are, that he will not

not employ his Power (as no true Miracles can be done without the Concurrence of his Power) to deceive his Creatures; and therefore the Reaſoning of *Nicodemus*, when he came to viſit our Saviour was right, *We know that thou art a Teacher come from God, becauſe no Man can do theſe Miracles that thou doeſt, except God be with him.* Since Miracles then are the avowed Effects of a divine Power, we muſt certainly be miſtaken in our Judgment of them, when, with Regard to their Author, we eſteem one greater than another. In Effects, indeed, that are produced by human Power, we are apt to ſay, that ſome of them are greater than others, *i. e.* that they require more and greater Degrees of Power for the Production of them; but this Diſtinction vaniſhes in our Conſideration of the ſupreme Being, to whoſe Omnipotence, the greateſt Effect we can imagine, gives no Limitation, but is equally with the ſmalleſt, under the Compaſs of his Acting. To us, perhaps, it may ſeem a greater Cure to diſpoſſeſs a Demon, than to drive away a Fever, but in the Hand of the Son of God, while he dwelt among us, they were Operations equally eaſy; and yet, a Miſconception in this Matter has certainly led ſome into an Opinion, that the ſeveral Demoniacks, mentioned in the Goſpels, were only ſo many Perſons afflicted with ſome ſtrange and uncommon Diſeaſes.

But what theſe Demons, or evil Spirits, which our Saviour, his Apoſtles, and the primitive Chriſtians, expelled out of the Bodies of Men, could not be Diſeaſes, is plain both from the Scriptures, and eccleſiaſtical Writers, who make a conſtant and manifeſt Diſtinction between the curing Diſeaſes, and

and casting out of Devils; for when the *Evangelist* tells us, that, *Matt.* iv. 24. *They brought unto* Christ *all sick People, that were taken with diverse Diseases, and those which were possessed with Devils, and those that were Lunatick, and had the Palsey, and he healed them*; when, Chap. x. 1. *He gave to the Apostles Power against evil Spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all Manner of Sicknesses and Diseases*; and accordingly, *Mark* i. 34 *They healed many that were sick of diverse Diseases, and cast out many Devils*; when *Irenæus* informs us that the Christians, in his Days, *did truly cast out Devils, and heal the Sick by Imposition of Hands*; and *Origen*, that *they cast out Devils, and healed many Diseases*, can any one, of tolerable Understanding, think that the Diseases healed, and the Devils cast out, were one and the same Thing?

That there were evil Spirits of this Kind, the holy Scriptures have taken such abundant Care to acquaint us with their Origin and Fall, their Names and Numbers, their Government and Orders, their malicious Designs and Employments, *&c.* that no one can doubt of their Existence, who believes these holy Oracles to be true. That both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, before our Saviour's Coming, Men were possessed with these evil Spirits, is evident from the Testimony of *Josephus*, who tells us of a very powerful Form of Exorcism, which descended from *Solomon*, who learned of God; and from the Testimony of *Plutarch*, who acquaints us, that the Exorcists of most Nations advised those that were possessed, to repeat the *Ephesian* Letters. And, that these evil Spirits, in our Saviour's Time, were distinct Substances, and not the Diseases of Mankind, is evident from the Circumstances of their Ejection, from their ex-

poſtulating with him, *What have we to do with thee? Art thou come to deſtroy us? Art thou come to torment us before the Time?* And from his commanding them ſometimes *to be ſilent*, and ſometimes *to come out of the Man, and to enter into him no more*, &c.

The Truth is, theſe apoſtate Spirits had gotten ſo far Poſſeſſion of the World, that they began to rival God in his Worſhip, and therefore one End of his Son's Incarnation is ſaid to be this, *John* iii. 8. *That he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil*, and Luke xi. 21, 22. *overcome the ſtrong one, and divide his Spoils.* And this, by the Way may ſuggeſt a Reaſon, why at, or about the Time of our Saviour's Coming, and perhaps more eſpecially in the Places which he frequented, God might permit the Devil to exert himſelf in an unuſual Manner, in order to be the more ſignally triumphed over by the Saviour of the World, and thoſe that were delegated by him to convert Mankind to his Religion. Nay, had I Leiſure to proceed to eccleſiaſtical Writers, I might eaſily ſhew, how victorious the Name of *Chriſt* was over theſe Principalities and Powers of Darkneſs, even after his Departure out of this World, for *That our Lord was ſent for the Deſtruction of theſe evil Spirits, you may now learn* (ſays *Juſtin Martyr*) *from what is done before your Eyes; for many Chriſtians throughout all the World, and in every City of your Empire, have healed many that were poſſeſſed of the Devil, and ſtill do they eject them, by the Invocation of the Name of* Jeſus, *whom none of your Inchanters, Conjurers, or Sorcerers were able to expel. And give me a Man*, (ſays *Tertullian*, in that noble Challenge of his to the heathen Powers,) *give me a Man here before your Tribunals, that is viſibly*

viſibly poſſeſſed by the Devil; and if, when he is commanded by any Chriſtian, to declare what he is, he don't immediately confeſs himſelf to be a Devil, not daring to lye to a Chriſtian, then let the Blood of that Chriſtian be ſhed before you in that very Place. But I forbear, and ſo proceed to the next Objection, which relates to our Saviour's Behaviour at the Marriage-Feaſt.

Our bleſſed Saviour, indeed, was a Perſon of ſo grave and ſerious a Deportment, that whatever Inſtances we find of his Pity and Compaſſion to Mankind, of his grieving and being troubled, and even weeping upon ſome Occaſions, we can meet with none of his Laughing, nor any Token of Mirth or Joy extraordinary, in the whole Hiſtory of his Life: But we muſt not from thence infer, that he was of a ſtiff and preciſe Temper, or in any Degree an Enemy to ſuch Forms of Civility or ſocial Uſages, as were then in Practice. If therefore we may be allowed to ſuppoſe (what ſeems, indeed, highly probable) that this Marriage at *Cana* was between Perſons of his own Kindred and Acquaintance, and that, by the very Rules of celebrating ſuch Feſtivals among the *Jews*, all Exceſs and Intemperance was excluded, then will it follow, that it could be no Diſparagement to our Saviour's Character to accept of the Invitation that was made him, and to be preſent at ſuch a Meeting.

Among us, indeed, (eſpecially among the vulgar Sort) there are ſometimes, on theſe Occaſions, Liberties taken, that are not ſo juſtifiable; but, among the *Jews*, there was always the greateſt Decency and Sobriety imaginable, obſerved in the Celebration of their Marriages. To this Purpoſe,

Governor of the Feaſt (as ſome ſay, of the ſacerdotal Race) was always choſen, whoſe Office it was, to have the Superintendency of the Diſhes and Wine, and to oblige the Gueſts to obſerve all the Decorums, that Religion required; and, not only ſo, but other Perſons, at this Time, were likewiſe appointed to break Glaſs-veſſels, as a common Signal, to give the Company Notice, that they had already drank enough, and were not permitted to run to Exceſs. Under this Regulation, 'tis ſcarce imaginable, that the Gueſts, at a *Jewiſh* Marriage, could be guilty of any Intemperance, and leaſt of all at this in *Galilee*, where our *Saviour*'s Preſence and Obſervation, the Gravity of his Behaviour, and the Seaſonableneſs of his Diſcourſe, may well be preſumed to heighten the Decorum, and to keep all the Company under a proper Reſtraint.

What, therefore, the Governor of the Feaſt ſays to the Bridegroom, in relation to the Water that was turned into Wine, is to be underſtood only as a general Repreſentation of a Cuſtom, uſual at other Feſtivals, which was to bring the *beſt Wine at firſt*, and towards the Concluſion, (that which *was worſe*; which Cuſtom (as the Governor tells him) was not obſerved here: For the Difference between this Entertainment, and others is, that *thou haſt kept* the *good Wine until now*. So that, *when Men have well drank*, is only a Circumſtance thrown in to illuſtrate the Compariſon, or deſcribe the latter End of a Feaſt, and has no manner of Reference to the Condition of the Company then preſent. But allowing the Words in the *Greek* to be a Deſcription of the Condition that the Company was then in, yet it will by no Means follow,

follow, that they had proceeded to any Intemperance, becauſe the Words are equally capable of an innocent, as well as a vicious Meaning. The *Greek* Word, indeed, in its primitive Signification, means no more than *drinking after the Sacrifice*; and, as there is nothing in Etymology, that determines this to be done to exceſs, or beyond the proper Bounds of Joy in a Feſtival; ſo there are ſeveral Inſtances in Scripture, wherein it was certainly done according to the Rules of Sobriety and Moderation. Thus (to mention one out of many) in the LXX's Verſion of *Geneſis*, where it is ſaid, that Joſeph's *Brethren drank and were merry with him*; and yet no one can imagine, but that, in their preſent Circumſtances, thinking no other, than that he was the Governor of *Egypt*, and being apprehenſive that he had no good Deſign again them, they were too much upon their Guard, and ſollicitous about their own Safety, to give any Way to Intemperance in his Preſence: And, if the Expreſſion here, and in ſeveral other Paſſages, may be taken in a virtuous Senſe, we cannot but conclude (unleſs we can ſuppoſe that St. *John* deſigned to expoſe his Maſter's Behaviour upon this Occaſion) that he intended we ſhould underſtand him in the moſt favourable Acceptation.

We, indeed, in our Tranſlation ſay, that the Water-pots, wherein the Wine was created, *John* ii. 6. *contained two or three Firkins a piece*, but ſome, who have looked more nicely into the original Word tranſlated Meaſure, here ſpoken of, have brought it ſo low, as to make the whole ſix Pots hold no more than about fourteen or fifteen Gallons of our *Engliſh* Meaſure. But not to de-

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ſcend ſo low, we will ſuppoſe, at preſent, that the Quantity of Wine made by our Saviour at this Feaſt, was as large as our Tranſlation repreſents it, yet, whoever conſiders the Nature of *Jewiſh* Marriages, how they were celebrated with Feaſting and Rejoicings, not only on the Day of Solemnity, (as it is with us) but for ſix or ſeven Days after, and that, at theſe Feaſts, not only all their Relations and Neighbours, and Acquaintance were invited, but that it was well taken likewiſe if any others (though not invited) would come to partake of the Entertainment, and bear a Share in the Joy: Whoever conſiders this, I ſay, cannot but imagine, that a very large Quantity of Wine muſt needs be requiſite at ſuch a Time, ſince it was to be a Supply, not for that Day only, but for all the ſucceeding Days, until the Time of the Feaſting was expired.

Nay, even ſuppoſing farther, that our Lord, upon this Occaſion, did not confine himſelf to a preciſe Quantity, proportionate to the Company, or Period of the Feſtival, and (what is more) that ſome of the Company might abuſe his Liberality, by their Intemperance, (which is a Conceſſion not to be gathered from the Text) yet he cannot therefore be charged with adminiſtring to their Exceſs, by making ſuch an ample Proviſion, any more than we can charge the Providence of God with being inſtrumental to all the Gluttony and Drunkenneſs which is committed in the World, merely becauſe he affords that Meat and Drink which Men of inordinate Appetites abuſe to Exceſs. The Truth is, as it is an high Commendation of Providence, that it crowns us with Plenty, (whatever Uſe we make of it) and beſtows upon

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us all Things richly to enjoy; ſo was it not unbecoming a Perſon, inveſted with a divine Commiſſion, to give, on this Occaſion, an eminent Inſtance of his flowing Liberality, and, by his generous Proviſion for the Family, to leave a grateful Memorial of his benevolent Regard to two Perſons, that, very likely, were his Relations, and had juſt entered into the honourable State of Matrimony.

Since therefore our Lord anſwered, in ſo free and plentiful a Manner, his Mother's Requeſt at laſt, there ſeems to be ſomething in their Suppoſition, who, from the Propriety of the *Greek* Expreſſion, think that his Mother ſpake to him, before the Wine was out, but when it grew ſo low, that ſhe plainly perceived, there would not be enough for the Company; and that our Saviour's Reply to her will very juſtly bear this Senſe. "*What is it to you or me? i. e.* the Care of pro- "vided Wine, upon this Occaſion, does not pro- "perly belong to you or me; but admitted it "did, *My Hour is not yet come.* 'Tis too ſoon, "as yet, to ſet about it; becauſe it is highly fit- "ting, that the Neceſſity of that ſuper-natural "Supply, which I intend them, ſhould be a little "more felt, in order to recommend the Benefit "itſelf, and to give the Manner of attaining it, "a deeper Impreſſion on their Minds."

This ſeems to be no unnatural Conſtruction of the Words, and removes all the ſeeming Harſhneſs of our Saviour's Anſwer, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* We miſtake the Matter, however, very much, if we think that the Word which we render *Woman*, was any Title of Diſreſpect or Indifference, (as it ſeems to be in our Tranſlation) ſince it is frequently uſed by the beſt Authors, when

when the higheſt Marks of Eſteem are intended. The polite *Xenophon* himſelf puts it in the Mouth of one of his *Perſian* Chiefs, when he was addreſſing himſelf to a captive Lady, and comforting her under her unfortunate Circumſtances; and certainly a Time there was, that our Lord called his Mother by this Appellation, when he was far from being harſh or undutiful to her, even when he was hanging on the Croſs, and tenderly recommending both his Mother to his beloved Apoſtle, and that Apoſtle to his Mother's Love and Affection, *Woman behold thy Son.* So little does our Saviour's Conduct, in this whole Tranſaction, deſerve theſe horrid and impious Cenſures, which of late have been thrown upon it!

Whatever ſome modern *Jews* and *Infidels* may alledge againſt the Abuſe, which (as they pretend) the Writers of the *New Teſtament* have put upon the Prophecies of the *Old*, by applying them to a wrong Senſe, no Man need be told, that an Attempt of this Nature had been as impertinent, the Affront to Man's Reaſon as inſolent, and the Event as fruitleſs, (nay, as fatal to their Cauſe, had they impoſed a falſe, or even controverted Senſe, upon the Predictions relating to the *Meſſiah*,) as it would have been, had they urged ſuch Predictions as were not acknowledged to belong to him at all. The Truth is, if the *Jews* underſtood the Prophecies, relating to the *Meſſiah*, in one Senſe, and the Apoſtles, in their Addreſs to them, applied them in another, we cannot ſee how they could ever have made one Proſelyte, being in the ſame Condition with what St. *Paul* deſcribes, when he tells us, that *he who ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue* (and why not he that ſpeaketh in an unknown Meaning?) *ſpeaketh to the Air,*

A. Hogenberg fecit

Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee, calleth Simon Peter and Andrew, Matt. 4. 18

Air, and becometh a Barbarian *to him that heareth but underſtandeth him not.* So that every *Jew*, converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith, is an implicit Proof of the Apoſtles applying the ancient Prophecies in a Senſe that was then current and familiar to them.

That the famous Prophecy in *Iſaiah*, Chap. vii. 14. is thus applied by St. *Matthew*, Chap. i. 23. to prove that *Chriſt* was born of an immaculate Virgin, we took Occaſion, in our Anſwer to the fourth of theſe Objections, to ſhew. The remaining Allegation is, that the Name of the Perſon, of whom the Prophet ſpeaks, was to be *Immanuel*, whereas the Name of that Son of *Mary*, of whom St. *Matthew* ſpeaks, by God's expreſs Command, was *Jeſus*, and therefore the Words of the Prophet are miſapplied by the Evangeliſt.

Now nothing is more common in Scripture, than, by the calling or naming of a Perſon or Thing, not to mean that Perſon or Thing ſhould be commonly diſtinguiſhed by that Name, but only, that it ſhould have ſuch Properties and Qualities in it, as that Name did denote; or, in other Words, that it ſhould really be what the full Senſe of that Word imported. Thus, of the City of *Jeruſalem*, it is foretold by the Prophet, *Iſaiah* i. 26. that it ſhould be called *the City of Righteouſneſs*, when it really was to be ſuch a City; for, in the foregoing Words, it is promiſed, *that God would reſtore her Judges, as at the firſt, and her Counſellors, as at the Beginning.* And, in like manner, tho' it be declared by this Prophet, that the wonderful Child, which God promiſed to the Houſe of *David* ſhould be called *Immanuel*, yet, if he was but what that Name properly imports, *God with us*, in a moſt eminent

and peculiar Manner, it is not to be doubted, but that the Prophecy received its full Completion in the Perſon of our Saviour *Chriſt*.

For, beſides God's univerſal Preſence, there is a Preſence of Favour and Diſtinction, whereby he is ſaid to be, in a more peculiar Manner, with thoſe whom he loves and bleſſes above others. And, in this Regard, the Child here ſpoken of is juſtly called *Immanuel*, becauſe (as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, 2 *Cor.* v. 19.) *God was in him, reconciling the World to himſelf*, for his Sake and Sufferings *not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them*; ſo that by him (*Eph.* ii. 13, 18.) *they, who were ſometime afar off, are made nigh, have Acceſs to the Father*, (Chap i. 6.) *are accepted in the Beloved*, and become, of Enemies and Strangers, Friends and Children, inſomuch that God vouchſafes to dwell in them, and to be one with them. And, as he unites us to himſelf by Grace, ſo did he, in this Child, condeſcend, by an ineffable Generation, to unite our Subſtance and Nature to himſelf, *to be perfect God, and perfect Man*, (Chap. viii. 29. Heb. ii. 14.) *that ſo he might be the Firſt-born among many Brethren, and redeem the Children from Death, who are Partakers of Fleſh and Blood, by himſelf taking part of the ſame.* Let it not then be any more objected, that the Child in the Prophecy could not be called *Immanuel*, whom we confeſs to have been called *Jeſus*; for he is therefore our *Immanuel*, becauſe our *Jeſus*; therefore, moſt eminently, moſt literally, *God with us*, becauſe, by ſo miraculous an Union, a *Saviour of his People from their Sins.*

It may ſeem perhaps ſurprizing to ſome, that St. *Matthew* ſhould ſo frequently introduce his Citations with a *this was done, that it might be fulfilled*

filled which was ſpoken by the Prophet: But whoever conſiders the *Idiom* of the *Hebrew* Tongue, cannot but know, that the Phraſe, anſwering to the Expreſſions, *that it might be fulfilled*, means no more, than that *hereby was verified*, or that *this Event anſwered to the Prediction*, or the like. Nay, the *Jews* were accuſtomed to ſay, that a Paſſage of Scripture was then fulfilled, when any Thing happened that was applicable to it; and therefore it is no Wonder, that St. *Matthew*, who himſelf was a *Jew*, and very probably wrote his Goſpel in the *Hebrew* Tongue, for the Benefit of his Countrymen, ſhould naturally fall into their Style and Manner of Expreſſion.

Now whoever conſiders the State of the *Jews* in *Egypt*, their Bondage, and Danger of utter Extinction, by reaſon of the Decree which paſſed for the Deſtruction of all their male Children (had not the Providence of God prevented the Execution of it) will ſoon perceive the Cauſe, why *Egypt* is made, in Scripture, the common Figure and Emblem of extream Danger, and imminent Death; and why a Deliverance out of *Egypt* ſhould be applied to every great Act of Preſervation, where there ſeemed to be no viſible Means of Eſcape, inſomuch that, whenever any Inſtance of ſuch a watchful and protecting Providence happened, it was an uſual and proverbial Speech among the *Jews* (who were wont then, as they are ſtill, to apply Sentences out of *Holy Writ* to the common Occurrences of Life) to ſay, in Scripture-phraſe, *Out of* Egypt *have I called my Son*, or *he hath called him out of* Egypt, *i. e.* he hath reſcued him from the Jaws of Death, or from the like Danger, that the *Iſraelites* were in, when he brought them

out of *Egypt* with a *mighty Hand, and a ſtretched out Arm.* Since *Joſeph* then was ordered to flee into *Egypt*, and to tarry there until *Herod* was dead, for this Reaſon, becauſe *Herod ſought the young Child's Life:* This diſtinguiſhing Preſervation of *Jeſus*, by Means of his Retreat, till the Danger was over, will juſtify the *Evangeliſt* (even tho' it had been any other Country, as well as *Egypt*, whereunto he retired) in applying to him the proverbial Saying, upon that Occaſion, *Out of* Egypt, *i. e.* out of manifeſt Danger, *have I called my Son.*

The Removal of the Ten Tribes from their native Country, into a foreign Land, there to die, or live in Slavery, was ſo grievous a Calamity, that the Prophet *Jeremiah* (by way of *Proſopopœia*) introduces *Rachel*, the favourite Wife of *Jacob*, that great Progenitor of the *Iſraelites*, making bitter Lamentation for their Loſs, and refuſing all Conſolation, becauſe there was no Hopes of their Recovery. And the Murder of ſo many innocent Babes at *Bethlehem*, by the bloody Decree of *Herod*, was an Event ſo dolorous to their tender Parents, that the *Evangeliſt*, when he came to relate it, thought he might juſtly (by way of Accommodation) apply the Words of the Prophet, and, in the Name of all the miſerable Mothers, that had loſt their Children, make *Rachel*, upon this Occaſion, (and as a farther Accompliſhment of the Prophecy) return to her Weeping again. The rather, becauſe *Rachel*, having been long dead before the Captivity, may, with equal Propriety, by the *Evangeliſt*, as ſhe is by the *Prophet*, be introduced weeping; the rather alſo becauſe ſhe was ſo fond a Lover of Children, that ſhe

ſhe is fitly enough brought in here in the Room of the tender Mothers, who wept for the Loſs of theirs; and the rather, becauſe the Slaughter of the *Bethlemites* might be called that of her Children, becauſe among them was the Place of her Sepulture, after that ſhe had loſt her Life in the bitter Pangs of Child-birth.

There is no Prophet, we own, wherein it is expreſsly ſaid, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be called a *Nazarene*, but the Obſervation of St. *Jerom*, in his *Comment* upon this Place, is not amiſs, *viz.* that when St. *Matthew* mentions the Word *Prophets* in the Plural Number, (whereas in other Places he had always cited ſome particular Prophet) he thereby ſhews, that he did not take the Words from the Prophets, but only the Senſe.

Since then the Title of *Nazarene*, both *Jews* and other Enemies of *Chriſtianity* have always, by way of Contempt, given to our bleſſed Saviour, becauſe he was ſuppoſed to come out of that very City, from whence it was thought impoſſible, that any good Thing ſhould come; and ſince moſt of the Prophets ſpeak of *Chriſt*, as a Perſon that was to be reputed vile and abject, *a Stranger to his Brethren, and even an Alien to his Mother's Sons, deſpiſed and rejected of Men, deſpiſed and eſteemed not*, here is the plain Senſe of the Words, *he ſhall be a* Nazarene; and the Angel, by God's Appointment, no doubt, ſent him to this contemptible Place, that he might from thence have a Name of Infamy and Contempt put upon him, according to the frequent Intimations by the Prophets.

The Word we render *Wiſemen*, in its Original ſignifies *Magicians*, which, however now it beſpeaks

ſpeaks not ſo good a Character, was, nevertheleſs, heretofore a Name of very innocent and honourable Signification. The ſtudious and inquiſitive, whoſe Buſineſs and Profeſſion led them to ſearch into Nature, its moſt abſtruſe Cauſes and Effects, and, more particularly, into the Motions and Diſpoſitions of the heavenly Bodies, were diſtinguiſhed by this Title: And, in what profound Veneration and Reſpect they were held, appears from the moſt important Matters, both ſacred and civil, being committed to their Adminiſtration. They were the Counſellors, the Judges, the Prieſts, the Princes, in a Word, the *Oracles* of the *Eaſtern* Countries. But, as the beſt Arts are ſometimes perverted to ill Purpoſes; ſo it happened to theſe, that, falling into the Hands of bad Men, who met with People ignorant and credulous, and not only eaſy, but even glad to be deluded, they degenerated into the Cheats of *judiciary Aſtrology*; and theſe Abuſes grew ſo general, as, at laſt, to fix an ill Senſe upon the Word, and a Scandal on the Science itſelf.

It were a Wrong and great Indignity to the Perſons now before us, not to believe them of the nobler and better Sort; but we can hardly be perſuaded (tho' ſome would endeavour to do it) that they were Perſons of Royal Dignity, becauſe we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the *Evangeliſt* would have omitted a Circumſtance of ſo great Moment, both for their Honour, and our Lord's. We can hardly think, but that ſome Account would have been given of their royal Train, and Equipage, and that all *Jeruſalem* would have been moved as much to ſee their Entry, as they were to hear their Queſtion: Nor can we imagine, that

that it would have been decent in *Herod*, to have received them with no more Reſpect, to have diſmiſſed them to *Bethlehem* without Attendance, much leſs to have laid his Commands upon them, to return back and bring him an Account of the Child as ſoon as they had found him, had they been Perſons of equal Rank and Dignity with himſelf. Upon theſe Conſiderations we may juſtly deny them the Title of *Kings*, tho' we cannot but allow them to be Perſons of great Wiſdom, Learning, and Integrity; of which ours, and ſome other Tranſlations of the Bible have been ſo ſenſible, as very prudently to decline the odious Name of *Magicians*, and to call them *the Wiſemen of the Eaſt*, but what Part of the *Eaſt* it was that they came from, few Interpreters have agreed.

Some have imagined, that theſe Travellers came out of *Perſia*; others, from *Chaldea*; others, from *Arabia*; and others again, from *Meſopotamia*. All theſe Countries lay *Eaſtward* from *Jeruſalem* and the *Holy-Land*; and, in each of theſe, ſome antecedent Notions of the *Meſſiah* may be accounted for. In *Chaldea* and *Perſia*, by the Captivity of the *Jews*, and the Books of *Daniel*; in *Arabia*, by the Nearneſs of their Neighbourhood, and frequent Commerce; and in *Meſopotamia*, beſides theſe common Helps, they had the Prophecy of their Countryman, *Baalam*, concerning a Star, that ſhould come out of *Jacob*, to direct them. But as we know of no Record, wherein this Prophecy was preſerved, but the Book of *Moſes*, which the People of *Meſopotamia* neither read, nor believed; ſo it ſeems evident, that *Baalam*'s Words do not refer to a Star, that ſhould ariſe at any Prince's Birth, but to a certain King, who ſhould be as glorious and ſplendent in his Dominions, as

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the Stars are in the Firmament. Upon the whole therefore it ſeems moſt likely, that theſe Wiſemen came out of *Arabia* (which according to *Tacitus*, was the Boundary of *Judea* Eaſtward) not only becauſe the Gifts, which they preſented, were the natural Products of that Country, which was famous likewiſe for its *Magi*, inſomuch that *Pythagorus* (as *Porphyry* informs us) went into *Arabia* to acquire Wiſdom; but becauſe its Neighbourhood to *Judea* might give theſe Wiſemen the Advantage of diſcerning the Star better, than any more diſtant Nation had.

For, that this Star was no Cœleſtial one, and ſuch as might be ſeen at vaſt Diſtance, its Motion, contrary to the ordinary Courſe of Stars, its performing the Part of a Guide to the Travellers, and that by Day, very probably, as well as Night, its accommodating itſelf to their Neceſſities, and diſappearing and returning, as they could beſt, or leaſt be without it, and (what is a Circumſtance, as remarkable as any) its pointing out, and ſtanding over the very Place, where the Child was, (which the Height and Diſtance of common Stars makes it impoſſible for them to do) are a ſufficient Demonſtration. It ſeems not improbable therefore, that what the Evangeliſt calls a Star, was only that glorious Light, which ſhone upon the *Bethlehem* Shepherds, when the Angel came to impart unto them the Tidings of our *Saviour*'s Birth; for that this Light was exceeding great is clear from that Expreſſion, which ſtiles it the Glory of the Lord, and that it was a Light from Heaven hanging over their Heads, the Words in the Greek, as well as Latin Verſion ſufficiently inform us.

Now every one knows, that ſuch a Light, at a great Diſtance, appears like a Star; or, at leaſt, after

after it had thus ſhone about the Shepherds, it might be lifted up on high, and then formed into the Likeneſs of a Star; where ſtanding vertically over *Judea* for ſome Time, it might direct the *Arabian* Aſtrologers (whom ſo ſtrange a PHAENOMENON could hardly eſcape) to the capital City, as the likelieſt Place to gain Intelligence of the new-born King, whoſe Star they had ſeen in the Eaſt, *i. e.* from the Place of their Abode, which was in the *Eaſt*: For, ſhould we ſuppoſe, that this Light was placed in any Part of the *Eaſtern* Hemiſphere, it would have denoted ſomething extraordinary among the *Indians*, or other *Eaſtern* Nations, rather than among the People of the *Jews*.

But how came theſe *Eaſtern* Sages to know this Star, or luminous Appearance in the Heavens (place it where we will) denoted the Birth of a King? How far, for the Reſolution of this Queſtion, it muſt be obſerved, what ſome Heathen Hiſtorians tell us, *viz. that, through the whole* Eaſt, *it was expected, that, about that Time, a King was to ariſe out of* Judea, *who ſhould rule over all the World.* Nor could it be well otherwiſe, ſince, from the Time of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, we find the *Jews* diſperſed through all the Provinces of the *Perſian* Monarchy, and that in great Numbers, and many People of the Land becoming *Jews*; and, after their Return home, increaſing ſo mightily, that they were diſperſed through *Africa*, *Aſia*, and many Cities and Iſlands of *Europe*, and (as *Joſephus* tells us) wherever they dwelt, making many Proſelytes to their Religion. Now theſe *Wiſemen*, living ſo near to *Judea*, the Seat of this Prophecy, and converſing

with *Jews*, *i. e.* with thoſe, who, every where, expected the Completion of it at that Time, as ſoon as they came to ſee this extraordinary Star, or Body of Light, hovering over *Judea*, they might rationally conjecture, that it ſignified the Completion of that celebrated Prophecy, concerning the King of *Jewry*, over the Center of which Land, they, being then in the *Eaſt*, might ſee this Meteor hang.

Not long after the Departure of theſe *Eaſtern* Sages from *Bethlehem*, we find a prodigious Multitude of innocent Babes inhumanly put to Death, upon the Account of him, whom theſe Wiſemen came to adore. But, to vindicate the Juſtice and Goodneſs of Providence in this Proceeding, we need not only appeal to God's univerſal Dominion over all his Creatures, and the Right he has to take away, in what Manner he pleaſes, the Being, which he gave us; we need only conſider the preſent Life, not as our laſt and final State, but as one, whoſe principal Tendency is to another; and then it will appear, that there is no certain Meaſure to be taken of the Divine Juſtice or Goodneſs towards us, without taking in the Diſtributions of that other Life, which indeed is the main End of our living at all. What *Solomon* therefore, in his *Wiſdom*, ſays of the Righteous in general, is much more verified in the Caſe of theſe harmleſs Babes, *Wiſd.* iii. 2, &c. *In the Sight of the Unwiſe they ſeemed to die, and their Departure is taken for Miſery, but they are in Peace: For, tho' they were puniſhed in the Sight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality.* For a frail, a ſhort, a troubleſome, a dangerous Life, God gives them the Recompence of an immortal, a ſecurely happy,

a compleatly glorious one; which not only vindicates, but magnifies his Goodneſs and Liberality to them. He conſiders their Infancy, and the noble Fruit which might have ſprung from theſe tender Plants, had they been allow'd to grow to full Maturity, and accordingly rewards them: For, tho' they wanted the Will of Martyrdom, which riper Years may have, yet it muſt allowed, that they were clear of that voluntary and actual Sin, which thoſe riper Years would have contracted: And therefore, as (in the moſt literal Senſe) they were not defiled with ſenſual Pleaſures, but left the World in Virgin-Innocence; as they were truly redeemed from among Men, whoſe early Tranſlation to a State of Bliſs prevented the Hazards and Temptations of a wicked World; and, as they were (ſtrictly ſpeaking) *the Firſt-fruits unto God and the Lamb*, who began to ſhed their Blood in the Cauſe of a new-born Saviour; ſo God hath been pleaſed to vouchſafe them a peculiar Honour, *Rev.* xiv. 3, 4, 5. *To ſing as it were a new Song before the Throne, and to follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth, becauſe in their Mouth was found no Guile, for they were without Fault before the Throne of God.*

We have but one Objection more to anſwer, and that is, a ſeeming Inconſiſtency in our Saviour, in diſcovering to the *Samaritan* Woman his divine Character, which he had ſo often deſired his Diſciples to conceal. Our Saviour, 'tis true, was ſo far from making any unneceſſary Declarations of himſelf, that, both upon St. *Peter*'s confeſſing him to be the *Chriſt*, and after his Transfiguration, wherein he was declared to be *the Son of God*, we find him charging his Diſciples to ſay nothing

of this, until his Refurrection: Becauſe their Teſtimony, in theſe Points, might not only look like a Matter concerted between him and them, but becauſe indeed they were not qualified to be his Witneſſes in theſe Things, until they had *received Power from on High* by the coming *down of the Holy Ghoſt.* 'Tis to be obſerv'd however, that, when our Lord is himſelf fairly called upon, and eſpecially by Perſons inveſted with Authority, he never once conceals his Divine Nature and Commiſſion.

When, *John* x. 24. *the* Jews *came round him in* Solomon's *Porch, and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou make us doubt? If thou be the* Chriſt, *tell us plain*; his Anſwer is expreſs, *I told ye, and ye believed not, the Works, that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witneſs of me, for I and my Father are one.* When he ſtood before the Judgment-ſeat, and the High-prieſt demanded of him, *Matt.* xxvi. 63, 64. *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the* Chriſt, *the Son of God*; his Anſwer is, *Thou haſt ſaid:* Or (as St. *Mark* expreſſes it, Chap. xiv. 62) *I am, and ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the Right-hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Nay, there are ſome Inſtances, wherein, of his own Accord, and without any Provocation of this Kind, he freely diſcovers who he was: For, having cured the Man that was born blind, and afterwards meeting him accidentally, *John* ix. 35, *&c. Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?* ſays he; whereupon the Man asking, *Who is the Son of God, that I may believe on him?* Our Saviour replies, *Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he, who talketh with thee:* And therefore we need leſs wonder, that,

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when this *Samaritan* Woman had firſt of all confeſſed him to be a Prophet, and (as her Words ſeem to imply) was a little dubious, whether he was not the *Meſſiah*, our Saviour ſhould prevent her Enquiry, and tell her voluntarily, that he was. Eſpecially conſidering, that ſuch a Declaration might be a Means to prepare her, and the reſt of the *Samaritans*, whenever his Apoſtles ſhould come, and preach the Goſpel unto them, to receive their Teſtimony, as we find by the Hiſtory of the *Apoſtolick Acts*, that they did with great Gladneſs.

Thus have we endeavoured to ſatisfy all the Exceptions of any Weight, that the Lovers of *Infidelity* have hitherto made to this Part of the Evangelical Hiſtory; and, if *Chriſtianity* ſtood in need either of the Support or Teſtimony of *Heathen* Authors, we might ſay, that the Incarnation of *Chriſt*, the Son of God, is no more, than what the *Greeks* (as *Julian* avers) affirm both of *Æſculapius* and *Pythagoras*, *viz.* that they were both the Sons of *Jupiter*, tho' they appeared in human Nature, which Doctrine in the Evangeliſt St. *John*, *Amelius*, the Maſter of *Porphyry*, allows to be true. This *Platoniſt*, upon reading the Beginning of St. *John*'s Goſpel, ſwore by *Jupiter*, "That the "*Barbarian* (as he called him) had hit upon the "right Notion, when he affirmed, that the *Word*, "which made all things, was *in the Beginning*, "in Place of prime Dignity and Authority with "God, and was that God, who created all Things, "and in whom every Thing, that was made, "had, according to its Nature, its Life and Be-"ing; that he was incarnate, and clothed with "a Body, wherein he manifeſted the Glory and "Magnificence of his Nature; and that after his "Death

" Death he returned to the Re-poſſeſſion of Di-
" vinity, and became the ſame God, which he
" was, before his aſſuming a Body, and taking
" the human Nature and Fleſh upon him."

That the Birth of our bleſſed *Jeſus*, of a Virgin immaculate, is no more, than what the ancient *Jewiſh* Doctors expected in their *Meſſiah*, and therefore *Simon Magus*, who greatly affected that Character, pretended that his Mother *Rachel* bore him without the Loſs of her Virginity: That the new Star, or Body of Light, which, upon our Saviour's Birth, conducted the Wiſe-men to him, is acknowledged by *Julian*, tho' he would gladly aſcribe it to natural Cauſes, is ſet off with great Eloquence by *Chalcidius*, in his Comment upon *Plato*'s *Timæus*, and perhaps might be that very Phænomenon, which *Pliny* deſcribes under the Name of a Comet; that our Lord's Fore-runner, *John the Baptiſt*, was ſuch a Perſon, as the *Goſpel* repreſents him, *viz.* an Exhorter of the *Jews* to the Love and Practice of Virtue, and to Regeneration by Baptiſm, and a new Life, we have an ample Teſtimony in *Joſephus*: That our Lord himſelf was certainly a Prophet, *Phlegon*, who was the Emperor *Adrian*'s Freed-man, owns, and, in his Hiſtory, has related ſeveral Events, which he foretold; that he was a great Worker of Miracles, the Authors of the *Talmud* own; nor can *Celſus* and *Julian*, his bittereſt Enemies, deny it, only they would gladly impute them to wrong Cauſes, his great Skill in magical Incantations: That human Bodies were frequently poſſeſſed with Devils, who afflicted them with grievous and tormenting Diſeaſes, is the joint Conceſſion both of *Jamblicus* and *Minutius Fælix*; and that our bleſ-

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ſed Lord had the Power of curing theſe, and of deſtroying the Dominion of evil Spirits, wherever he came, is the great Complaint of *Porphyry*, who makes it no Wonder, that their Cities ſhould be waſted with Plagues, *ſince* Æſculapius, *and the reſt of the Gods, ever ſince the Admiſſion of the* Chriſtian *Religion, were either become uſeleſs, or fled.* So prevalent is the Force of Truth, that it ſeldom fails to draw Confeſſions from thoſe, who leaſt of all intend them.

DISSERTATION II.

Of the Four Evangeliſts, *and their Writtings.*

BEFORE we proceed any farther in the Hiſtory of our Bleſſed *Saviour*'s Life, it may not be amiſs to give ſome ſhort Account of the four *Evangeliſts*, that have recorded it. I call them *four*, becauſe whatever ſpurious Pieces gained Credit in the World afterwards, the Tradition of the Church, from the Beginning of the ſecond Century, makes it evident, that the *Goſpels* then received, were only the four *Goſpels*, which we now own. St. *Matthew*, who ſtands in the Front of theſe *Evangeliſts*, and is generally allowed to be the firſt who committed the *Goſpel* to writing, was the Son of *Alpheus*, a *Galilean* by Birth, a *Jew* by Religion, and a *Publican* by Profeſſion.

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Among the *Jews*, as well as other Nations, the Cuſtom, at this Time, prevailed of having more Names than one; and therefore we find his Brother-*Evangeliſts*, St. *Mark* and *Luke*, giving him the Name of *Levi*, with a civil Intent to avoid all Mention of his former, not ſo reputable, Profeſſion, before he was called to the Apoſtleſhip; but (what is no leſs an Inſtance of his own Modeſty) in the *Goſpel* written by himſelf, he not only takes the Name, by which he was moſt commonly known, but generally adds the odious *Epithet* to it of *Matthew the Publican*, intending thereby, no doubt, to magnify the Grace of God, and the Condeſcenſion of our bleſſed Saviour, who did not diſdain to take into the higheſt Dignity of the *Chriſtian* Church thoſe, whom the World rejected, and accounted vile.

Whether he was born at *Nazareth* or no, 'tis certain, that his ordinary Abode was at *Capernaum*, becauſe his proper Buſineſs was, to gather the Cuſtoms on Goods, that came by the Sea of *Galilee*, and the Tribute, which Paſſengers were to pay, that went by Water; for which Purpoſe there was a Cuſtom-houſe by the Sea-ſide, where *Matthew* had his Office, or Toll-booth, there ſitting at the Receipt of Cuſtom. Our Lord, having lately cured a famous *Paralytick*, retired out of the Town, to walk by the Sea-ſide, where he taught the People, that flocked after him; and, having eſpied *Matthew* in his Office, he called him to become one of his Diſciples, whereupon, without any Manner of Heſitation, without ſtaying ſo much as to ſettle his Accounts, and put his Affairs in Order, he left all, and followed him.

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We cannot but ſuppoſe, that as he lived in *Capernaum*, the Place of our Lord's uſual Reſidence, and where his Sermons and Miracles were ſo frequent, he muſt have been acquainted with his Perſon and Doctrine before this Time; and, conſequently, in a good Preparation to receive the Call with Gladneſs? And, that he did ſo, a good Evidence it ſeems to be, his entertaining our Lord and his Diſciples at Dinner, next Day, in his Houſe; whether he invited ſeveral of his Profeſſion, in Hopes, no doubt, that our Saviour's Company and Cõnverſe might make the like Impreſſion upon them.

From his Election to the Apoſtolate, he continued conſtantly with our Lord, during his Abode upon Earth; and after his Aſcenſion, for the Space of eight Years, preached the Goſpel in ſeveral Parts of *Judea*; but, being now to betake himſelf to the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, he was intreated by the *Jews*, who had been converted to the Chriſtian Faith, to commit to writing the Hiſtory of our Lord's Life and Actions, and to leave it among them, as a ſtanding Record of what he had preached to them; which accordingly he did, and ſo compoſed the Goſpel, which we have now under his Name.

The Countries in which he preached, were chiefly *Parthia*, and *Æthiopia*; in the latter of which he converted Multitudes, ſettled Churches, and ordained Miniſters to confirm and build them up; and having ſignalized his Zeal in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and his Contempt of the World, in a Life of moſt exemplary Abſtinence, he is, moſt properly thought to have ſuffered Martyrdom at *Nadabar* a City in *Æthiopia*; but of the

Time and Manner of his Death, no certain Account is tranſmitted to us.

As for what is related by *Nicephorus*, of his going into the Country of the Cannibals, and conſtituting *Plato*, one of his Followers, Biſhop of *Myrmina*; of *Chriſt*'s appearing to him in the Form of a beautiful Youth, and giving him a Wand, which he pitched into the Ground, and it immediately grew up into a Tree; of his ſtrange converting the Prince of that Country; of his numerous Miracles, peaceable Death and ſumptuous Funeral, with abundance more of the like Nature, they are juſtly to be reckoned among thoſe fabulous Reports, that have no ground, either of Truth or Probability to ſupport them.

At the Requeſt of the *Jewiſh* Converts (as we ſaid) and, as ſome add, at the Deſire of the reſt of the Apoſtles, St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel, about eight or nine Years after our Lord's Reſurrection: For, that it was extant, before the Diſperſion of the Apoſtles, is plain from *Bartholomew* carrying it with him into *India*, where (as *Euſebius* informs us) it was found by *Pantenus*, when he went to propagate the Faith in thoſe Parts, and by ſuch as retained the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, was reputed a valuable Treaſure.

As it was primarily deſigned for the Benefit of the *Jewiſh* Converts, whatever ſome Moderns may ſay to the contrary, the Voice of all Antiquity muſt carry it againſt them, that it was originally wrote in *Hebrew*; not in the antient pure *Hebrew*, (for that in a great Meaſure, was loſt among the Vulgar) but in a Language commonly uſed at that Time by the *Jews* of *Paleſtine* (and therefore ſtill called the *Hebrew* Tongue, becauſe wrote in *He-*

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brew Characters) which was the *Syriac*, with a Mixture of *Hebrew* and *Chaldee*.

Thoſe who maintain that St. *Matthew* wrote in *Greek*, produce theſe Arguments for their Opinion. Firſt, That ſome of the Fathers (ſuch as *Origen*, *Epiphanius*, and St. *Jerom*) quote, indeed, the *Hebrew* of St. *Matthew*, but quote it as a Book of no great Authority, which they would not have done, had it been the true Original. Secondly, That had St. *Matthew* wrote in *Hebrew*, the *Hebrew* Names in his Goſpel would not have been interpreted into *Greek*, nor would he have quoted the *Old Teſtament*, according to the *Sentuagint* Tranſlation. Thirdly, That the *Greek* Language was then very common in *Paleſtine*, and all the Eaſt. And Fourthly, Since all the other Authors of the *New Teſtament* wrote in *Greek*, why ſhould St. *Matthew* alone write his Goſpel in *Hebrew*? But to theſe Arguments it may be replied, Firſt, That the uniform Teſtimony of all the Antients, who tell us St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel in *Hebrew*, is certainly of very great Weight; but then we muſt know, that there were two of theſe Copies of St. *Matthew*, the one pure and uncorrupted, of which they have ſpoken with Eſteem, the other depraved by *Hereticks*, which they have contemned, and looked upon as *Apocryphal*. Secondly, The *Hebrew* Names, interpreted into *Greek*, prove the very contrary to what would be inferred from it; for this demonſtrates that the Tranſlation was *Greek*, and the Original *Hebrew*. Thirdly, Of the ten Paſſages in the *Old Teſtament*, that St. *Matthew* cites in his Goſpel, there are ſeven of them which reſemble the *Hebrew* more than the *Septuagint*; in the other three, the *Septuagint* and

the *Hebrew* themſelves agree; but the plain Truth is, that St. *Matthew* quotes by Memory, and relates not ſo much the Words as the Senſe of the Paſſages. Fourthly, However common the *Greek* Tongues might be in *Paleſtine*, among the better Sort of People, yet it is certain that the Generality of the *Jews* ſpoke commonly what they called *Hebrew*, which was *Syriac* and *Chaldee* mixed with *Hebrew*. And Fifthly, Tho' all the reſt of the *New Teſtament* were written in *Greek*, yet that is no conſequence why this Part of it ſhould; and, if Convenience were conſidered, it ſhould rather, one would think, be adapted to the general Uſe and Capacity of thoſe for whom it was wrote. The Diſpute, however, is about a Matter of Fact, and this is a Fact atteſted by all the Antients, many of whom had ſeen his Original, and were capable of making a Judgment of it.

All the Antients, with one Conſent, aſſure us that St. *Matthew* wrote in *Hebrew*. *Papias*, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, *Euſebius*, St. *Cyril of Jeruſalem*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Auſtin*, St. *Chryſoſtom*, the Author of the *Latin Commentary* on St. *Matthew*, which is aſcribed to St. *Chryſoſtom*, and the Author of the *Synopſis of the Scripture*, which bears the Name of *Athanaſius*, are a Cloud of Witneſſes, who depoſe this; and therefore ſtrange it is, that any ſhould queſtion its being originally written in that Language, when the Thing is ſo univerſally and undeniably aſſerted by all Antiquity; not one, that I know of, after the ſtricteſt Enquiry I could make, diſſenting in this Matter; and they certainly had far greater Opportunities of being ſatisfied in theſe Things, than we can have at ſo great a Diſtance.

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This Goſpel of St. *Matthew* was, for a long Time, in Uſe among the *Jews*, who had been converted to Chriſtianity, and when, ſome Time before the *Romans* laid Siege to *Jeruſalem*, they retired to *Pella*, they carried it thither along with them; and from thence it was diſperſed into *Decapolis*, and all the Countries beyond *Jordan*, where the *judaizing Chriſtians* ſtill made Uſe of it in the Time of *Epiphaneus* and *Euſebius* of *Cæſaria*.

But theſe Chriſtians did not preſerve this ſacred Depoſitum with all the Fidelity they ſhould have done: They added to it ſeveral Things, which, perhaps, they might have heard from the Mouths of the Apoſtles, or from their immediate Diſciples, which in Time brought it under the Suſpicion of other Believers. The *Ebionites*, at length, got it into their Hands, and by their Additions and Defalcations, in Favour of ſome Errors, they had fallen into, concerning the Divinity of our Saviour, and the Virginity of the bleſſed Mother, ſo corrupted it, that at length it was given up by the other Churches, which adhered to the Form of ſound Doctrine. It continued, however, a long Time in its primitive Purity in the Hands of the *Nazarenes*, or firſt Believers in *Paleſtine*, who (tho' they were zealous in the Obſervation of the Law) embraced no ſuch Opinions, as the *Ebionites* did, nor made any Alterations in the Goſpel. But, after the Extinction of this Sect, we hear no more of the genuine Goſpel of St. *Matthew*, becauſe the antient *Greek* Verſion, which, in the apoſtolick Times, was made from it, having always preſerved its primitive Integrity, did, long before this, univerſally prevail, and was looked upon as authentick as

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the Original; for tho' its Author be uncertain, yet every one, who mentions it, always aſcribes it to ſome one Apoſtle or other.

When St. *Matthew* began to write, the great Queſtion among the *Jews* was, whether our bleſſed Saviour was the true *Meſſiah*, or no; and the main Tendency of his Goſpel ſeems to prove this. For he ſhews, by his mighty Deeds, that he was the *Chriſt*, the Son of God; that his Mother *Mary* was a Virgin; that he was not come to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it; that his Miracles were not magical Operations, nor the Effects of any human Art, but inconteſtable Proofs of the Power of God, and his divine Miſſion. St. *Ambroſe* obſerves, that none of the Apoſtles have entered ſo far into the Particulars of our Saviour's Actions, as St. *Matthew* has; that none of them have related the Hiſtory of the Wiſemen coming from the *Eaſt*, or the Parable of the wiſe and fooliſh Virgins, and ſome others, but he; that, in ſhort, he has given us more Rules for the Conduct of Life, and more Leſſons of Morality, ſuitable to our Neceſſities, than any; and all this in a natural and eaſy Stile (tho' ſometimes mixed with *Hebraiſms*) ſuch as becomes an Hiſtorian, and eſpecially a ſacred Hiſtorian, whoſe Narration ſhould be free from Affectation, and all ſuch trifling Ornaments, as do not agree with the Gravity and Dignity of his Subject.

If we compare St. *Matthew* with the three other *Evangeliſts*, we may perceive a remarkable Difference in the Order and Succeſſion of our Saviour's Actions, from Chap. iv. 22. to Chap. xiv. 13. which has much perplexed Chronologers and Interpreters. Some pretend that St. *Matthew* ſhould be

be followed, but others think it more reaſonable to ſubmit to the Authority of the other three; eſpecially ſince St. *Mark*, who follows him cloſe enough in every other Thing, forſakes him in this Particular. However this be, it can prove no Prejuduce to the Truth of Facts, which are the eſſential Part of the Goſpel; and as to the Order of Time, the ſacred Authors are not always ſollicitous to follow it exactly.

Tho' the Name of *Mark* ſeems to be of *Roman* Extraction, yet the *Evangeliſt*, now before us, was born of *Jewiſh* Parents, and originally deſcended from the Tribe of *Levi*. What his proper Name was, or upon what Change or Accident of Life he might aſſume this, we have no Manner of Intelligence; but as it was no unuſual Thing for the *Jews*, when they went into the *European* Provinces of the *Roman* Empire, to conform to the Cuſtoms of the Country, and, while they continued there, to be called by ſome Name of common Uſe; ſo ſome have conjectured, that when *Mark* attended upon St. *Peter* to *Rome*, he might at that Time take upon him this Name, which (as he never returned to *Judea* to reaſſume his own) he for ever after retained. In the Writings of the Apoſtles we read of ſeveral called by this Name. There is *John*, whoſe Surname was *Mark*; *Mark*, the Siſter's Son of *Barnabas*; *Mark*, whom St. *Paul* calls his Fellow-labourer; and *Mark*, whom St. *Peter* ſtiles his Son: But which of theſe was the *Evangeliſt*, or whether the *Evangeliſt* might not be a Perſon diſtinct from each of theſe, has been a Matter of ſome doubt among the Learned.

That he was one of the ſeventy Diſciples, and, among them, one of thoſe who took Offence at our

Lord's

Lord's Diſcourſe of *eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood*, ſome of the Antients have affirmed; but *Euſebius*, from *Papias*, who was Biſhop of *Hierapolis*, and lived near thoſe Times, tells us poſitively, that he was no Hearer or Follower of our Saviour. He was converted by ſome of the Apoſtles, and moſt likely by St. *Peter*, to whom he was a conſtant Retainer, and ſerved him in the Capacity of an *Amanuenſis*, and an Interpreter. For tho' the Apoſtles were divinely inſpired, and, among other miraculous Powers, had the Gift of Languages conferred on them; yet the Interpretation of Tongues ſeems to be a Gift, more peculiar to ſome, than others. and it might be St. *Mark*'s Talent, either by Word or Writing, to expound St. *Peter*'s Diſcourſes to thoſe, who underſtood not the Language, wherein they were delivered.

He accompanied St. *Peter* in all his Travels; preached Chriſtianity in *Italy* and at *Rome*; and, at the Requeſt of the Chriſtians in thoſe Parts, compoſed his Goſpel, which St. *Peter* afterwards reviſed and approved. From *Italy* he went into *Egypt*, and having fixed his chief Reſidence in *Alexandria*, he there, and in the Country round about, propagated the Chriſtian Faith with ſuch Succeſs, that Multitudes both of Men and Women not only became Converts, but engaged themſelves likewiſe in a more ſtrict Profeſſion of the Religion that he taught them, than ordinary.

Philo, in his *Treatiſe of a contemplative Life*, gives us a long Account, and high Commendations of a Set of People, who, in a pleaſant Place, near the *Maræotick* Lake in *Egypt*, formed themſelves into religious Societies, and lived a ſtrict philoſophick Life;

Life; and theſe, *Euſebius* affirms to have been Chriſtians converted, and brought under theſe admirable Rules by St. *Mark*, at his coming into *Egypt*: But, whoever conſiders *Philo*'s Account, will plainly find that he Means it of *Jews*, and Profeſſors of the *Moſaic* Religion, and not of the *Chriſtians*; partly, becauſe it is improbable that *Philo*, being a *Jew*, ſhould give ſo great a Character and Commendation of Chriſtians, who were ſo hateful to the *Jews*, at that Time, in all Places of the World: Partly becauſe *Philo* ſpeaks of them as an Inſtitution of a conſiderable Standing, whereas Chriſtians had but lately appeared in the World, and were later come into *Egypt*; and partly, becauſe many Things in *Philo*'s Account do no way ſuit with the State and Manner of Chriſtians at that Time.

From *Alexandria* he went Weſtward; and, paſſing through the Countries of *Marmarica*, *Pentapolis*, and ſome others, in his Way to *Libya*, (tho' the People were barbarous in their Manners, as well as idolatrous in their Worſhip) by his preaching and Miracles, he not only converted, but before he departed, confirmed them in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel. Upon his Return to *Alexandria* he preached with all Boldneſs, ordered and diſpoſed of the Affairs of the Church, and wiſely provided for the Continuance thereof, by conſtituting Governors and Paſtors in it. The great Number of Miracles which he wrought, and the Reproaches which ſome of the Converts made upon the ſenſeleſs Idols of the *Egyptians*, ſo exaſperated their Rage, that they were reſolved to deſtroy this Introducer of a new Religion among them. It was at the Time of *Eaſter*, when the great So-

lemnities of their God *Serapis* happened to be celebrated, at which *Feſtival*, the Minds of the People being excited to a paſſionate Vindication of the Honour of their Idol, they broke in upon St. *Mark*, then engaged in the ſolemn Celebration of divine Worſhip, and binding his Feet, they dragged him through the Streets, and other rugged Places, to a Precipice near the Sea; but for that Night, they thruſt him into a dark Priſon, where his Soul, by a divine Viſion, was ſtrengthened and encouraged under the Ruins of a ſhattered Body. Early next Morning the Tragedy began again. For, in the ſame Manner, as they had done the Day before, they dragged him about, till his Fleſh being raked off, and his Veins emptied of Blood, they threw it into a Fire, and ſo burnt it; but his Bones and Aſhes the Chriſtians gathered up and decently intombed near the Place where he uſually preached.

After the Defeat of *Simon Magus*, (whereof we ſhall have Occaſion to ſay more hereafter) the Reputation of the Chriſtian Religion grew ſo great, and Converts at *Rome* became ſo many, that they were deſirous to have in Writing thoſe Doctrines which had hitherto been imparted to them by Word of Mouth only. St. *Mark*, to whom this Requeſt was made, accordingly ſet himſelf to recollect what he, by long Converſation, had learned from St, *Peter*, who, when the other had finiſhed the Work, peruſed, approved, and recommended it to the Uſe of the Churches: And for this Reaſon it is, by ſome of the Antients, ſtiled St. *Peter's* Goſpel; not that St. *Peter* dictated it to St. *Mark*, but becauſe St. *Mark* did chiefly compoſe it out of that Account which St. *Peter* uſually delivered in

in his Diſcourſes to the People. And accordingly St. *Chryſoſtom* obſerves, that the *Evangeliſt*, in his nervous Stile and Manner of Expreſſion, takes a great Delight in imitating St. *Peter*.

This Goſpel, indeed, was principally deſigned for the Uſe of the Chriſtians at *Rome*; and from hence ſome may be apt to think it highly congruous, that it ſhould at firſt be written in the *Latin* Tongue; but it muſt be conſidered, that as the *Jewiſh* Converts, in that City, underſtood but little *Latin*, ſo there were few *Romans* that did not underſtand *Greek*, which (as appears from the Writers of that Age) was the genteel and faſhionable Language of thoſe Times; nor can any good Reaſons be aſſigned, why it ſhould be more inconvenient for St. *Mark* to write his Goſpel in *Greek*, for the Uſe of the *Romans*, than that St. *Paul* ſhould, in the ſame Language, write his Epiſtle to that Church.

The original *Greek* Copy, under St. *Mark*'s own Hand, is ſaid to be extant at *Venice*, at this Day, written (as they tell us) by him at *Aquileia*, and from thence, after many hundred of Years, tranſlated to *Venice*, where it is ſtill preſerved, tho' the Letters ſo worn out, with Length of Time, that they are not capable of being read. There are likewiſe ſome *Greek* Manuſcripts, wherein the twelve laſt Verſes of this Goſpel are omitted; but they are extant in the greateſt Number of the moſt antient and authentick Copies, as well as in the Works of *Iræneus*, an Author of prior Date to any of the Manuſcripts, that want them: It is not to be queſtioned therefore, but that they originally belonged to St. *Mark*'s Goſpel, and were ſuppreſſed by ſome ignorant or conceited Tranſcriber

ſcriber, upon the Account of ſome ſeeming Contradiction between St. *Matthew* and this other *Evangeliſt*, which, with a ſmall Skill in critical Learning, may be eaſily reconciled.

We cannot compare St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* together, but muſt perceive, that the later had ſeen the Writings of the former, becauſe he often uſes the ſame Terms, relates the ſame Facts, and takes notice of the ſame Circumſtances; but we muſt not therefore infer, that all he intended in his Work was ſimply to abridge him; becauſe he begins his Goſpel in a different Manner; he omits ſeveral Things, particularly our Lord's Genealogy; he varies from him in the Order of his Naration; he relates ſome Facts that the other has omitted; he enlarges upon others in many Particulars, and (what is no mean Argument of his Truth and Impartiality in all the reſt) the ſhameful Lapſe and Denial of his beloved Maſter, St. *Peter*, he ſets down, with more and more aggravating Circumſtances, than any of the other *Evangeliſts* have recorded.

St. *Luke*, who, by ſome antient Authors is called *Lucius* and *Lucanus*, was a *Syrian* by Birth, a Native of *Antioch*, and by Profeſſion a *Phyſician*. *Antioch*, the Metropolis of *Syria*, was at this Time a City celebrated for the Pleaſantneſs of its Situation, the Fertility of its Soil, the Riches of its Traffick, the Wiſdom of its Senate, the Learning of its Profeſſors, and the Civility and Politeneſs of its Inhabitants, by the Pens of ſome of the greateſt Orators of their Times; and yet, above all theſe, it was renowned for this one peculiar Honour, that in this Place it was, where the Diſciples were firſt named Chriſtians.

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In *Antioch* there was a famous Univerſity, well repleniſhed with learned Profeſſors of all Arts and Sciences, where St. *Luke* could not miſs of a liberal Education; however, he did not only ſtudy in *Antioch*, but in all the Schools of *Greece* and *Egypt*, whereby he became accompliſhed in every Part of human Literature; and as the *Greek* Academies were then more eſpecially famous for the Study of Phyſick, our Evangeliſt, for ſome Time, applied himſelf to the Practice of that; and after his Converſion, continued, very likely, in the ſame Profeſſion, which was far from being inconſiſtent, but rather ſubſervient to the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, or the Cure of Souls.

As to his other Accompliſhment, the Art of Painting, the Antients knew nothing of it. *Nicephorus* is the firſt Author that mentions it, and tho' a great deal of Pains has been taken to prove, that ſome Pieces, ſtill extant, were drawn by his own Hand; yet the antient Inſcription found in a Vault near St. *Mary*'s Church, in the *Via Lata* at *Rome* (the Place where St. *Paul*'s Houſe is ſaid to have ſtood) where Mention is made of a Picture of the bleſſed Virgin, as one of the ſeven painted by St. *Luke*, is an Argument of better Authority for his Skill in that Art, than any that the Jeſuit *Gretſer*, in his laborious Treatiſe has produced. But whether ever our *Evangeliſt* painted the bleſſed Virgin, or not, it is certain, that he has left us ſo many Particulars, omitted by others, relating to the Conception, Birth and Infancy of her Son, that he ſeems to have been acquainted with her, and to have had ſome Share in her Confidence.

That he was one of the Seventy Diſciples, is a Notion inconſiſtent with his own Declaration in the

the Preface to his Goſpel; wherein he informs us, that the Facts, therein contained, were communicated to him by others, who had been Eye-Witneſſes, and Miniſters of the Word from the Beginning: And therefore the moſt probable Opinion is, that as the *Jews* lived in great Numbers, and had their Synagogues, and Schools of Education at *Antioch*, St. *Luke* was at firſt a *Jewiſh* Proſelyte, but afterwards, by St. *Paul* (while he abode in this City) converted to the Chriſtian Faith. A Companion of his Travels and Sufferings, he plainly appears to have been, if not from his firſt Converſion, at leaſt from the Time of St. *Paul*'s firſt going into *Macedonia*; for there, in his Account of the Apoſtle's Actions, he changes his Stile, and includes himſelf, ever after, as a Party concerned in the Narrative.

The Truth is, he followed him in all his Dangers, was with him at ſeveral Arraignments at *Jeruſalem*, and accompanied him in his deſperate Voyage to *Rome*; where he ſtill attended on him, to ſerve his Neceſſities, and ſupply thoſe miniſterial Offices which the Apoſtle's Confinement would not ſuffer him to undergo: Nay, it appears from a Paſſage of St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, that he returned with him to *Rome* the ſecond Time, waiting on him in the ſame Capacity, and eſpecially in carrying Meſſages to thoſe Churches where they had planted Chriſtianity: Nor can we well forbear thinking, that he continued his Attendance on him, until the Apoſtle had finiſhed his Courſe, and crowned his Miniſtry with his Martyrdom; by which kind Offices he infinitely endeared himſelf to St. *Paul*, who owned him for a Fellow-labourer, and called him the *beloved Phyſician*, and *the Brother, whoſe*

Praiſe

Praiſe is in the Goſpel, throughout all the Churches.

After the Death of St. *Paul*, how he diſpoſed of himſelf, is not ſo certain. Some are of Opinion that he returned into the *Eaſt*, and in *Egypt* and *Lydia* preached the Goſpel, wrought Miracles, converted Multitudes, and conſtituted Guides and Miniſters in Religion; but others rather think that he travelled into *Dalmatia*, *Gallia*, *Italy* and *Macedonia*, where he ſpared no Pains, nor declined any Dangers, that he might faithfully diſcharge the Truſt committed to him. Upon his coming into *Greece*, thoſe who make him die a violent Death, (for ſome are of a contrary Opinion) tell us, that he preached with great Succeſs, and baptized many Converts into the Chriſtian Faith, till a Party of Infidels, making Head againſt him, drew him to Execution, and for want of a Croſs, whereon to diſpatch him, hanged him upon an Olive-Tree, in the eightieth Year of his Age.

We have two Pieces of his, *viz.* his *Goſpel*, and the *Hiſtory of the Apoſtolick Acts*, wrote for the Uſe of the Churches, and both dedicated to *Theophilus*; but who this *Theophilus* was, it is not ſo eaſy a Matter to determine, ſince many of the Antients themſelves have taken this Name in a general appellative Senſe, for a Law of God, a Title common to every good Chriſtian; but others, with better Reaſon, have thought that it is the proper Name of ſome Perſon of Diſtinction, ſince the Title *of moſt excellent* is annexed to it, which is the uſual Form of Addreſs to Princes and great Men. But who this Perſon of Diſtinction was, it is impoſſible to tell, only we may ſuppoſe, that it was ſome conſiderable Magiſtrate, whom St. *Luke* had converted, and to whom he now dedicated

cated his Books, not only as a Teſtimony of honourable Reſpect, but as a Means of giving him a farther Information of thoſe Things wherein he had inſtructed him.

The Occaſion of his writing his Goſpel was (as himſelf intimates) the raſh and wrong Accounts given to the World by ſome, who either out of Ignorance or Deſign, had miſrepreſented the Actions and Doctrines of *Chriſt*, and ſowed the Seeds of Error in the Church. It is certain that this *Evangeliſt* is more circumſtantial in relating the Facts, and more exact in the Method and Order of them, than either of the two who wrote before him. The Hiſtory of *Zacharias*, the Generation of *John the Baptiſt*, the Angel's coming to the bleſſed Virgin, *Elizabeth*'s Salutation of her, at their firſt Interview, the Occaſion of *Joſeph* and *Mary*'s going to *Bethlehem*, the Circumſtances of our Saviour's Birth there, the Publication of it to the Shepherds, and the Teſtimony which *Simeon* and *Anna* gave to him in the Temple; theſe and ſeveral other Pieces of Hiſtory, as well as the Parables of the loſt Sheep, loſt Piece of Money, and returning Prodigal Son, *&c.* are not related by any other *Evangeliſt*. His Hiſtory therefore is an excellent Supplement of what they have omitted: Nor does it in the leaſt detract from the Authority of his Relations, that he himſelf was not preſent at the doing them; for if we conſider who were the Perſons from whom he derived his Account of Things, he had a Stock of Intelligence ſufficiently authentick to proceed upon; and, when he had finiſhed it, had the Sanction and Approbation of an Apoſtle divinely inſpired (as himſelf likewiſe was) even of the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* to confirm it.

Who-

The Potters field bought with the price of Blood. Matt. chap. 27.

Whoever looks into the Beginning of St. *Luke*'s Hiſtory of the *Apoſtolick Acts*, may eaſily perceive that it is a Continuation of what he had related in his *Goſpel*; for it takes up the Story at our Saviour's Aſcenſion, and continues it to St. *Paul*'s Arrival at *Rome*, after his Appeal to *Cæſar*, and ſo, properly ſpeaking, is but one Hiſtory divided into two Parts. The main Difference, between the *Goſpel* and the *Acts* is, that in the former he writes from the Information he had from others, but ſuch as were true and authentick Witneſſes; in the latter, from his own Knowledge, and perſonal Concern in the Things he relates.

His chief Deſign in the Compoſition of this Work, was, to write a true Hiſtory of the Apoſtles, and of the Foundation of the *Chriſtian* Churh, in Oppoſition to the *falſe Acts*, and *falſe Hiſtories*, which began then to be diſperſed about the World. This Hiſtory however does not comprize the *Acts* of *all* the Apoſtles, but confines itſelf chiefly to the moſt remarkable Paſſages of two, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, and even of thoſe two, it gives us but a ſhort and ſummary Account. St. *Peter*'s Story carries it down no lower than his Deliverance from *Herod*'s impriſoning him, and the Death of his Perſecutor, which happened in the Year of our Lord 44; and yet the Apoſtle lived four and twenty Years after this. And, in like Manner, the Hiſtory of St. *Paul* is far from being compleat. For, as from the Time of his Converſion, there is very little ſaid of him, to his coming to *Iconium*, which was twelve Years after, ſo his Story proceeds no farther than to his firſt coming to *Rome*, in the Year of our Lord 58, and yet, after this, he lived ten Years, and, having preached the Go-

ſpel in *Spain*, and other Parts of the *Weſt*, at laſt returned to *Rome*, and there ſuffered Martyrdom.

It muſt be owned however, that the *Evangeliſt* is more particular in his Account of St. *Paul* than of any other of the Apoſtles, and that not only, becauſe he was more ſignally active, in the Cauſe of *Chriſtianity*, but becauſe St. *Luke* was his conſtant Attendant, an Eye-witneſs of the whole Carriage of his Life, and privy to his moſt intimate Tranſactions, and therefore capable of giving a more full and ſatisfactory Relation of them.

The *Evangeliſt*'s Deſign, in ſhort, was not to compoſe a large Volume, but only to ſingle out ſome few Things, which he thought neceſſary for the Inſtruction of the Faithful, and, in this reſpect, his Work may be called an *Hiſtorical Demonſtration* of the Truth of the *Chriſtian* Religion; ſince therein we perceive our Lord's Promiſes fulfilled, in his Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, in his Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion into Heaven, in the ſovereign Power he exerciſes there, in the Miracles he enabled his Followers to work, in the Riſe and wonderful Progreſs of his Religion, and, in one Word, in the *Chriſtian* Church becoming univerſal, by the Call of the *Gentiles*.

We have only one Thing more to remark concerning this Hiſtory, *viz.* that, as St. *Luke* wrote it at *Rome*, and at the End of St. *Paul*'s two Years Impriſonment there, with which he concludes his Story; ſo his Way and Manner of Writing is exact and accurate; his Stile polite and elegant, ſublime and noble, and yet eaſy and perſpicuous, flowing with a natural Grace and Sweetneſs, admirably adapted to an hiſtorical Deſign, and, all along,

along, expreſſed in a Vein of purer and more refin'd Language, than is to be found in the other Writers of the ſacred Story.

St. *John*, tho' the laſt in Order, yet firſt in Quality among the *Evangeliſts*, was by Birth a *Galilean*, the Son of *Zebedee* and *Salome* (one of thoſe devout Women, who conſtantly attended our Lord in his Miniſtry) and Brother to *James*, who, to diſtinguiſh him from the other Apoſtle of the ſame Name, is generally called *James the Great*. Before his adjoining himſelf to *Chriſt*, he ſeems to have been a Diſciple to *John the Baptiſt*, and is thought to have been that *other Diſciple*, who, in the firſt Chapter of his *Goſpel*, is ſaid to have been preſent with *Andrew*, when *John* declared *Jeſus* to be *the Lamb of God*, and thereupon to have followed him to the Place of his Abode.

He was by much the youngeſt of the Apoſtles, yet he was admitted into as great a Share of his Maſter's Confidence, as any. He was one of thoſe, to whom he communicated the moſt private Paſſages of his Life; one of thoſe, whom he took with him, when he went and reſtored *Jairus*'s Daughter to Life; one of thoſe, to whom he exhibited a Specimen of his Divinity, in his Transfiguration on the Mount; one of thoſe, who were preſent at his Conference with *Moſes* and *Elias*, and heard that Voice, which declared him *the beloved Son of God*; and one of thoſe who were Companions of his Solitude, and moſt retired Devotions, and bitter Agonies in the Garden. Thus, of the three, who were made the Witneſſes of their Maſter's Actions, which he ſaw convenient to conceal, St. *John* had conſtantly the Privilege to make one. Nay, even of theſe three, he ſeems, in ſome Re-

ſpects, to have the Preference; to be known by the moſt deſirable of all Titles, *the Diſciple whom* Jeſus *loved*; to have the Honour of leaning upon his Lord's Boſom at Meat; to have the Intimacy with him to ask him a Queſtion, *viz. Who in the Company was the Traitor?* which even St. *Peter* himſelf had not Courage to do; and (what is the higheſt Inſtance of his Affection) to have his Mother, his ſorrowful and diſconſolate Mother, with his laſt dying Breath, committed to his Care and Comfort: Which peculiar Tokens of his Maſter's Favour and Eſteem, ſome have aſcribed to the Apoſtle's eminent Modeſty, others to his unſpotted Chaſtity; others think it an Indulgence due to his Youth, but they ſeem to have the righteſt Notion, who impute it to a Nearneſs of Relation, and a peculiar Sweetneſs of Diſpoſition, conſpiring to recommend him.

Upon the Diviſion of the Provinces, which the Apoſtles made among themſelves, *Aſia* fell to St. *John*'s Share, tho' he did not immediately enter upon his Charge, but ſtaid at *Jeruſalem*, at leaſt till the Death of the bleſſed Virgin, which was about fifteen Years after our Lord's Aſcenſion. After he was thus releaſed from his Truſt, he took his Journey into *Aſia*, and induſtriouſly applied himſelf to propagate *Chriſtianity*, preaching where the Goſpel had not yet taken Place, and confirming it where it had been already planted. Many Churches of Note and Eminence were of his Foundation; but the chief Place of his Reſidence was at *Epheſus*, where, tho' St. *Paul* had, many Years before, ſettled a Church, and conſtituted *Timothy* Biſhop of it, yet, conſidering that it was a City of exceeding great Reſort, both upon the Account

count of its Traffick, and the Conveniency of its Port, the Apoſtle thought he could not be ſeated more commodiouſly than here, for diſperſing the Knowledge of his Doctrines, to Natives of ſeveral Nations and Quarters at once.

After ſeveral Years (ſome ſay twenty-ſeven) ſpent here, he was accuſed to *Domitian* (who had then begun a ſevere Perſecution) as a great Aſſerter of *Atheiſm* and Impiety, and a publick Subverter of the Religion of the Empire; ſo that, by his Command, the Proconſul of *Aſia* ſent him bound to *Rome*, where, as *Tertullian* relates (in a Manner importing the Fact abundantly notorious) he was plunged into a Cauldron of Oil ſet on fire; but God, who had reſerved him for farther Services to the Truth, reſtrained the Heat of it (as he did in the fiery Furnace of old) and ſo preſerved him from this ſeemingly unavoidable Deſtruction. The Emperor however, unmoved with his miraculous Deliverance, ordered him to be baniſhed to *Patmos*, a ſmall diſconſolate Iſland in the *Archipelago*, where he remained ſeveral Years, inſtructing the Inhabitants in the Faith of *Chriſt*; and where he was vouchſafed thoſe Viſions, and prophetical Repreſentations, which he then recorded in his Book of *Revelation*, reaping this great Advantage from his Exile, that tho' he was cut off from the Society of Men, he was entertained with the more immediate Converſe of Heaven.

Upon the Death of *Domitian*, and the Succeſſion of *Nerva*, who reſcinded all the odious Acts of his Predeceſſor, and, by publick Edict, recalled thoſe, whom his Fury had baniſhed, St. *John* took the Opportunity to return into *Aſia*, and fixed his Seat again at *Epheſus*; the rather, becauſe the People

People of that Place had lately martyred their Biſhop *Timothy*. Here, with the Aſſiſtance of ſeven other Biſhops, he took upon him the Government of the large Dioceſs of *Aſia-minor*, erected *Oratories*, and diſpoſed of the Clergy in the beſt Manner that the Circumſtances of thoſe Times would permit; and having ſpent his Time in an indefatigable Execution of his Charge, travelling from *Eaſt* to *Weſt* to inſtruct the World in the Principles of the holy Religion, which he was ſent to propagate; and ſhunning no Difficulties or Dangers, to redeem Men's Minds from Vice, Error, or Idolatry, he finiſhed his Courſe, in a good old Age, and, in the Beginning of *Trajan*'s Reign, in the ninety-ninth Year of his Life died a natural Death, and was buried near *Epheſus*; a Martyr in Diſpoſition, and ſo far in Fact, as his Impriſonment from the *Jews*, and his boiling Cauldron, and Baniſhment by the *Romans*, could make him; a wonderful Pattern of Holineſs and Charity, and a Writer ſo profound, as to deſerve by way of Eminence, the Character of St. *John the Divine*.

As an Inſtance of his ſhunning no Dangers to reclaim Men from Vice, take the following Story, as related by *Euſebius*.

In his Viſitation of the Churches near *Epheſus*, he was much taken with a beautiful young Man, whom he took, and, with a ſpecial Charge, committed him to the Education and Inſtruction of the Biſhop of the Place, who undertook the Charge, inſtructed, and baptized him. After this he thought he might a little relax the Reins of Diſcipline, but the Youth made a bad Uſe of his Liberty, and, being debauched by evil Company, made himſelf Captain of a Gang of Highway-men,

the

the moſt looſe, cruel, and profligate Wretches of the Country. St. *John*, at his Return, underſtanding this, and, having ſharply reproved the Negligence of his Tutor, reſolved to find him out, and without any Conſideration of what Danger he entered upon, in venturing himſelf among Perſons of deſperate Fortunes and abandoned Conſciences, he went to the Mountains, where their uſual Haunt was; and, being there taken up by the *Centinel*, he deſired to be brought before their Commander, who no ſooner eſpied him coming towards him, but he immediately fled. The aged *Apoſtle* followed after, but not being able to overtake him, he paſſionately intreated him to ſtay, promiſing to undertake with God for his Peace and Pardon. He did ſo, and both melted into Tears; and the Apoſtle having prayed with, and for him, returned him a true Penitent, and Convert to the Church.

The firſt in Time, tho' placed laſt, is his *Apocalypſe*, or Book of *Revelation*, which he wrote in his Confinement at *Patmos*. After the *Preface*, and Admonition given to the Biſhops of the *ſeven Churches* of *Aſia*, it contains the Perſecutions which the Faithful had ſuffered from the *Jews*, *Hereticks*, and *Roman* Emperors, down as far as *Julian* the *Apoſtate*. After this, we have a View of that Vengeance which God has exerciſed againſt the Perſons of Perſecutors, againſt the *Roman* Empire, and the City of *Rome*, which is deſcribed under the Name of *Babylon*, the great Proſtitute, ſeated upon *ſeven Hills*; then we have a Deſcription of the peaceable and flouriſhing State of the Church for a Thouſand Years, and, after ſome Moleſtation from the *Turk* (as is ſuppoſed) the

the Happineſs of the Church Triumphant, is ſet off with all the imaginable Beauties of Rhetorick; and, at laſt, we come to a formal Concluſion of the whole Matter, and a ſevere Commination to all thoſe, who ſhall preſume either to add or diminiſh any Thing from this Prophecy.

That St. *John* the *Evangeliſt* was the Author of the Book of *Revelation*, all the moſt ancient Eccleſiaſtical Writers were agreed; until *Dionyſius* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, (in his Anſwer to one *Nepos*, another *Egyptian* Biſhop, who had revived the groſs Notion of *Cerinthus*, concerning the *Millennium*, in order to evade the Uſe, which this *Nepos* had made of the *Apocalypſe*) called in Queſtion its Authority, by aſſerting, "that ſeveral of the "Ancients had diſown'd this Book to have been "wrote by any apoſtolick Man; that *Cerinthus* "had prefixed *John*'s Name to it, to give the bet-"ter Countenance to his Dream of *Chriſt*'s Reign "upon Earth; and that (tho' it might be the "Work of ſome inſpired Perſon) it could not poſ-"ſibly be St. *John*'s, becauſe its Stile, Matter, "and Method, did by no Means agree with his "other Writings." Now, whoever looks into the ancient Writers of the Church, will find, that *Polycarp*, Biſhop of *Smyrna*, who (according to St. *Chryſoſtom*) was converſant with the Apoſtles, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, and *Tertullian*; Authors all of the ſecond Century, are unanimous, in aſcribing this Work to the ſame Hand, from whence the Goſpel and Epiſtles did proceed; and that therefore the Opinion of one private Doctor ſhould not prevail againſt the Authority of ſo many Writers, who were either contemporary, or nearly ſubſequent to the Apoſtles.

For,

For, be it allowed, that there is a Diverſity of Stile, yet does not every able Writer vary that, according to the Nature of the Subject he is upon? In *Hiſtory*, the Stile ſhould be *ſimple*; in *Epiſtles*, *familiar*; and in *Prophecies*, *majeſtick* and *ſublime*; and therefore what Wonder is it, if in Arguments ſo vaſtly different, the ſame Perſon did not always obſerve the ſame Tenor and Way of Writing? Nothing can be more different in their Method and Diction than the Book of *Proverbs*, and the Book of *Canticles*, and yet few have doubted but that *Solomon* was the Writer of both: But now, that *Cerinthus* ſhould be the Author of a Book which contains Doctrines directly oppoſite to the Errors which he broached, is a Thing incredible. For, whereas *Cerinthus* did not believe that God made the World, or that *Chriſt* died and roſe again; the Author of the *Revelation* aſcribes to God the Work of the Creation, and calls our bleſſed Saviour *The Firſt-begotten of the Dead*; and whereas *Cerinthus* made *Jeſus* merely the Son of *Joſeph*, and a Being different from that of *Chriſt*; the Author of the Revelation calls him expreſly the Son of God, and makes him one and the ſame Perſon with *Chriſt*. Tho' therefore there may be ſome Similitude between St. *John*'s Expreſſions, and the Notions of *Cerinthus*, in Regard to *Chriſt*'s Reign of a Thouſand Years, yet it had been much more prudent in *Dionyſius*, to have given a ſpiritual Senſe and Interpretation of theſe Expreſſions, than to aſcribe to a wicked and ſenſual Man (as *Cerinthus* was) a Book, which breaths nothing but Piety and Holineſs, an awful Dread of God, and a Devotion ſuch as the Angels perform in Heaven.

The Truth is, all Circumſtances concur to intitle our Apoſtle to be the Author of this Book: His Name frequently expreſſed in it; his writing it in the Iſland of *Patmos*, whither none but he was baniſhed; his writing particular Epiſtles to the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, which had either been planted or cultivated by him; and his ſtiling himſelf *their Brother and Companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of* Jeſus Chriſt; theſe, and many more Circumſtances that might be mentioned, added to the Doctrine contained in it, which is highly ſuitable to the apoſtolick Spirit and Temper, do evidently bear witneſs, that this Book was the Work of St. *John*, and conſequently of divine and canonical Authority.

Next to the Apocalypſe, in Order of Time, are the three Epiſtles which St. *John* wrote. The firſt of theſe is *Catholick*, calculated for all Times and Places, and containing moſt excellent Rules for the Conduct of the Chriſtian Life, and for Preſervation againſt the crafty Inſinuations of Seducers. The other two are but ſhort, and directed to particular Perſons; the one to a Lady of honourable Quality; and the other to the charitable and hoſpitable *Gaius*, ſo kind a Friend, and ſo courteous an Entertainer of all indigent Chriſtians.

Euſebius, and after him St. *Jerom* informs us, that St. *John* having peruſed the other three Goſpels, approved and confirmed them by his Authority; but obſerving withal, that theſe *Evangeliſts* had omitted ſeveral of our Saviour's Actions, ſuch, eſpecially, as were done before the *Baptiſt*'s Impriſonment, he wrote his Goſpel in order to ſupply what was wanting in them: And becauſe,

becauſe, at this Time, there were ſeveral Heretics (ſuch as *Cerinthus*, *Ebion*, and their Followers) ſprung up in the Church, who denied the divine Nature of *Jeſus Chriſt*: Another End of his Writing was to arm the World againſt the Poiſon of theſe Hereſies, by making it appear, that our bleſſed Saviour was God from all Eternity, and before his Incarnation; and that as other *Evangeliſts* had written the Series of his Generation, according to the Fleſh, he might write a ſpiritual Goſpel, beginning from the Divinity of *Chriſt*: Which was a Subject reſerved for him (as the moſt excellent Perſon) by the Holy Ghoſt.

When therefore the Biſhops of *Aſia*, and ſeveral Ambaſſadors from other Churches, had been, for ſome Time, ſolliciting him, he cauſed them to proclaim a general Faſt, to ſeek the Bleſſing of Heaven on ſo great and momentous an Undertaking; and, when this was done, he ſet about the Work, and compleated it in ſo excellent and ſublime a Manner, that the Antients generally reſembled him to an Eagle, ſoaring aloft within the Clouds, whither the weak Eye of Man was not able to follow him: For, *As the evangelical Writings* (ſays St. *Baſil*) *tranſcend all the other Parts of the Holy Scripture; becauſe, in other Parts, God ſpeaks to us by his Servants the Prophets, but in the Goſpels our Lord*, who is God *bleſſed for evermore, ſpeaks to us himſelf: So among all the evangelical Preachers none is like St.* John, *the Son of Thunder, for the Sublimity of his Diſcourſes, beyond any Man's Capacity duly to reach and comprehend.*

His Goſpel was originally wrote in *Greek*, but in a *Greek* that abounds with *Hebraiſms*, as do the

other *Evangeliſts*. His Diſcourſes are many Times abrupt, ſet off with frequent Antitheſes, and connected with many Copulatives; Paſſages often repeated, and Things, at firſt, as obſcurely propounded: His Words are peculiar to himſelf, and Phraſes uſed in an uncommon Senſe, which may poſſibly make his Way of Writing not ſo grateful to ſome nice Maſters of Eloquence. In citing Places from the *Old Teſtament*, tho' he ſometimes makes uſe of the *Septuagint*, yet he generally tranſlates from the *Hebrew* Original, and generally renders them Word for Word. For being an *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, and admirably skilled in the Language of his Country, this probably made him leſs exact in his *Greek* Compoſures, wherein he had no Advantage, beſides what was immediately communicated from above. But, what he wanted in the Politeneſs of his Stile, was abundantly made up in the Excellence and Sublimity of his Matter.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

From the Beginning of the Second Paſſover, *to our* LORD's Transfiguration. *In all, one Year, and about four Months.*

OUR bleſſed Saviour was now in the ſecond Year of his publick Miniſtry, when the near Approach of the *Paſſover* (which was the ſecond after his Baptiſm) called him to *Jeruſalem.* On the *South-eaſt* Side of the City, there was a famous Pool, and an Hoſpital called *Bethesda,* which conſiſted of five Portico's, in which lay a great Multitude of poor impotent People, with Diſtempers of all Kinds, waiting for the moving of the Water; for, at certain Times, an Angel came from Heaven, and putting the Pool in a Fermentation, convey'd ſuch a medicinal Virtue into it, that the firſt Perſon who entered it, after ſuch Commotion, was cured of whatſoever Diſtemper he had. On the Sabbath-Day our Saviour came to this Place; and ſeeing a poor Paralytick, who had been in that Condition for the Space of eight and thirty Years, and lain there a long while in Expectance of a Cure, but all in Vain; becauſe, whenever the Water was moved, ſome one or other always ſtepped in before

before and prevented him; he immediately healed him with a Word ſpeaking; and, at the ſame Time, ordered him to take up his Bed and walk home: But, while he was doing this, the *Jews* exclaimed againſt him for bearing a Burthen on the Sabbath-Day, which was directly contrary to their Law. The Man excuſed himſelf, by declaring that the Perſon who had miraculouſly cured him, commanded him ſo to do, which he thought a ſufficient Warrant: But when they underſtood that it was *Jeſus*, they brought him before the *Sanhedrim*, with a Deſign to take away his Life, as an open Prophaner of the Sabbath. Here, in Defence of himſelf, he alledged, *That ſince God (from whoſe Reſt they took the Obſervation of the Sabbath) did, on that Day, and all others, exerciſe the Works of Providence, Preſervation, and Mercy, there could be no Reaſon, why he, who was his Son, and inveſted with full Authority from him* (as he proves immediately in a Set Speech before the Council) *might not employ himſelf, on the Sabbath, as well as any other Day, in Actions of the like Nature:* This provoked the *Jews* ſtill more and more againſt him, for they looked upon him now not only as a Sabbath-breaker, but a Blaſphemer likewiſe, who, by making himſelf the Son of God, had claimed a Co-equality with him.

Before we proceed, let us ſee what the Learned have ſaid on ſome of the foregoing Paſſages.

From the Time that our Lord firſt began his Miniſtry, to the Concluſion of it, there had been four Paſſovers held at *Jeruſalem*; all, except the laſt, are not mentioned by the three firſt *Evangeliſts*, but St. *John* has been mindful to ſet every one

one down; the firſt, Chap. ii. 13. the ſecond, Chap. v. 1. the third, Chap. iv. 4. and the fourth, Chap. xiii. 1.

The Word tranſlated *Pool*, ſignifies any Pool or Head of Water, that is deep enough for a Man to ſwim in: But as, in hot Countries more eſpecially, the Uſe of conſtant bathing was highly neceſſary, for which Purpoſe it was uſual, in in every great City, to have publick Baths erected, ſome have imagined that this Pool was a large Baſon of Water of this Kind; and that the Porticoes about it were Places made for the Conveniency of dreſſing or undreſſing, in the Shade, for thoſe that were minded to bathe. However this be, it is certain, that in antient Times there were two Pools within the Compaſs of the Mount on which the Temple ſtood, the one called the *Upper-Pool*, 2 *Kings* xviii. 17. and the other *The Pool of* Siloam, *by the King's Garden*, Nehem. iii. 15, That St. *Jerom* (who himſelf had been at *Jeruſalem*) makes mention of two Reſervoirs, one filled with the Rains that fall in Winter, and the other with Water of a deep red Colour, as if it ſtill contained a Tinge of the Victims that formerly were waſhed in it; and that Mr. *Maundrel*, in his Travels, Page 107. tells us, that when he was there, he ſaw ſtill remaining, what was reputed the Pool of *Betheſda*, whereof he gives us the particular Dimenſions.

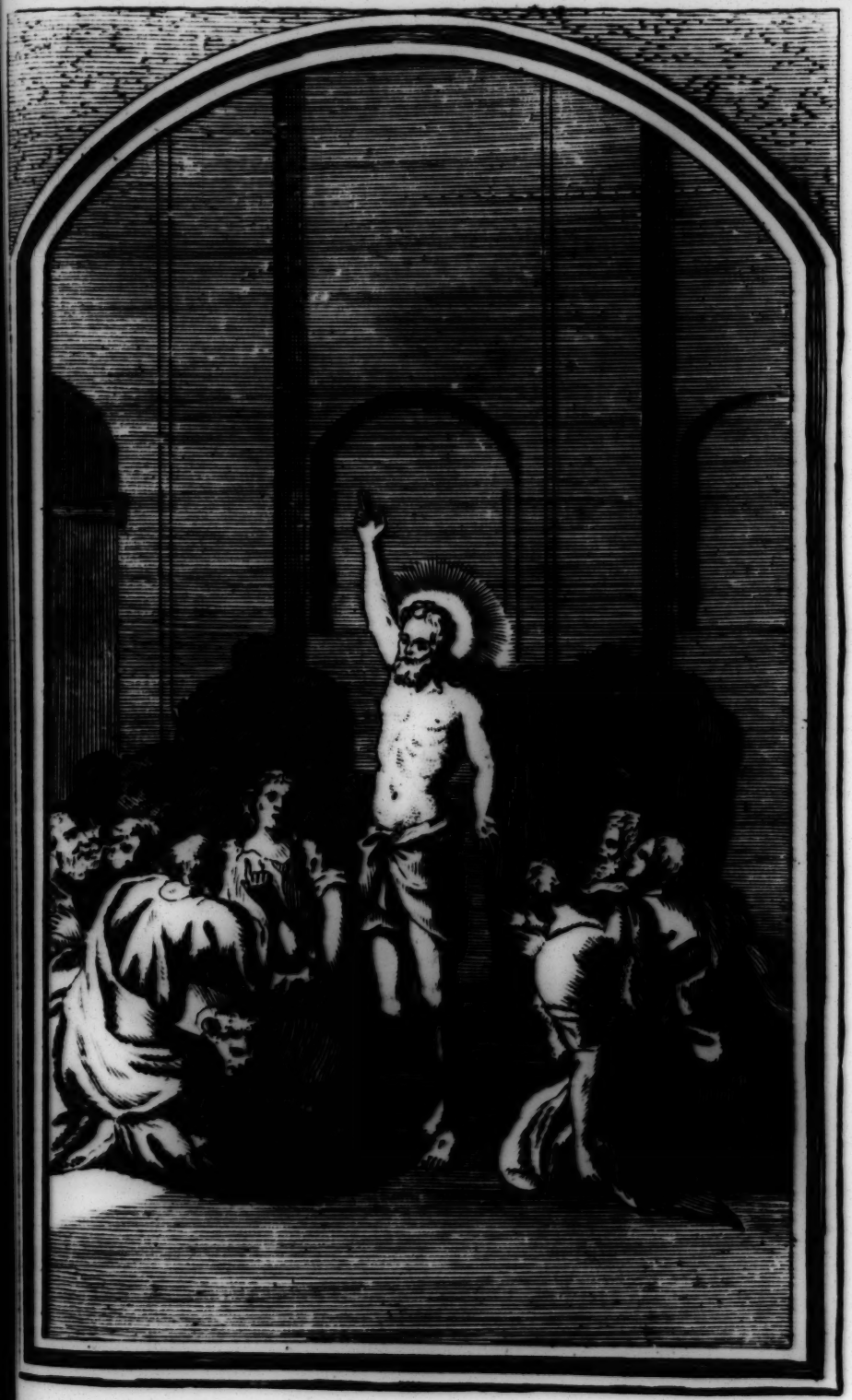
Some will have the Word *Betheſda* to ſignify a *Drain* or *Sink-houſe*, becauſe the Water which came from the Temple, and the Place where the Victims were waſhed, by ſubterraneous Paſſages ran into it; but moſt Interpreters expound it an *Houſe of Mercy*, ſo called, ſay ſome, becauſe the erecting

erecting of Baths was an Act of great Kindneſs to the common People, whoſe Indiſpoſitions, in hot Countries, required frequent bathing, tho' the Generality rather think, that it more properly had that Name, from God's great Goodneſs ſhewn to his People, by giving this healing Virtue to theſe Waters.

The *Greek* Word which we render *Infirmity* or *Weakneſs*, is, indeed, a general Name for almoſt all Diſtempers; but here it is ſo limited in its Signification, by the Circumſtances occurring in the Man's Hiſtory, that it can properly denote no other Diſeaſe than what we call a confirmed Palſey: For, beſides that, the Symptoms of no other Diſtemper do ſo exactly agree with the Deſcription given of this Infirmity, both in Point of its long Continuance, and extream Weakneſs; the very Word Weakneſs, in its moſt obvious Senſe, anſwers exactly to ſuch a Relaxation of the nervous Syſtem, as the Palſey is known to be, and (what is no mean Circumſtance) our Saviour makes uſe of the ſame Form and Method of Cure to this very Man, that he applies to another Paralytick, *Riſe, take up thy Bed and walk*, Matt ix. 6.

If it be asked, how it came to paſs that of the Multitude of infirm People, who lay at this Pool, our Saviour ſhould think fit to cure but one? The Anſwer is obvious, becauſe he was an Object moſt to be compaſſionated of any in the Place, not only becauſe he was too feeble to ſtep into the Water himſelf, and too poor to have any to aſſiſt him; but, more eſpecially, becauſe he had been now a long while in this Condition, and yet ſtill depended upon the good Providence of God for an Opportunity to be cured at one Time or other.

To



Christ appeareth to yᵉ eleven after his Resurrection Luke Chap. 24

To cure at once whole Multitudes, indeed, ſounds more popular, and carries the Face of more extenſive Goodneſs; but beſides that, our Saviour might, in this Caſe, very probably, conform to the Rule of Cure eſtabliſhed providentially at *Betheſda*, which was to heal but one Perſon at one Time; his great Deſign, in every Action of this Kind, was to prove his Character and Commiſſion from God; to which End one ſingle and inconteſtible Miracle was as ſufficient an Evidence as a Thouſand. The ſhort is, ſince our Lord was at Liberty to do what he would with his own, or to beſtow his Favours where he pleaſed, his Goodneſs was conſpicuous, in chuſing the moſt helpleſs Object, and his Wiſdom no leſs manifeſt, in leaving the reſt to the ſtanding Miracle of the Pool.

It is very obſervable, that whenever our Lord did any Miracle, he generally adjoined ſome Circumſtance or other to denote the Truth and Reality of it. Thus, after his Multiplication of the Loaves and Fiſhes, he ordered his Diſciples to gather up the Fragments, which amounted to twelve Baskets full. Upon his changing the Water into Wine, at *Cana*, he commanded the Servants to carry it to the Ruler of the Feaſt, for him to taſte it. When he had healed the Leper near *Capernaum*, he ſent him to preſent his Oblation, in Teſtimony of his Cure; and here, for the ſame Reaſon, *viz.* the Demonſtration of the Compleatneſs of his Cure, he bids the Paralytick *take up his Bed and go home.* But why did he this on the Sabbath-Day? Even to make his divine Power and Miſſion more univerſally known, eſpecially in *Jeruſalem*, the Capital of the Nation, and Center of the *Jewiſh* Church, by firſt

working this Miracle on the Sabbath-Day, when there were more People at Liberty to view and conſider it; and then ſending his Patient along the Streets, in a very uncommon Manner, and to make the People more inquiſitive, with his Bed upon his Back.

The Prohibition relating to the Obſervation of the Sabbath, runs thus: *Thus ſaith the Lord, Take heed to yourſelves, and bear no Burthen on the Sabbath-Day, nor bring it in by the Gates of* Jeruſalem, *neither carry forth a Burthen out of your Houſes on the Sabbath-Day, neither do ye any Work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-Day, as I commanded your Fathers*, Jer. xvii. 21, 22. and, according to the *Jewiſh* Canons, thoſe who did this, were puniſhable either by Death or Scourging. It muſt be acknowledged therefore, that our Saviour's Injunction to the impotent Man was contrary to the Letter of the Law; but then it may be juſtly ſaid that it was not contrary to the Senſe and Intention of it. The Law only prohibited civil Labour, and reſtrained Men from carrying ſuch Burthens as they were wont to do in the Way of their Trade; but it did not forbid the doing of any Thing that might be a Teſtimony of God's Mercy or Goodneſs to Mankind. As therefore the Sabbath was made for the Honour of God, and this Action was a publick Monument of his Mercy and Power, the Man, properly ſpeaking, did not break the Sabbath; neither did our Lord deſerve any Cenſure from the *Jews*, eſpecially conſidering that as he was a Prophet, even by their own Rules, he had Power to require what was contrary to the ceremonial Reſt of the Sabbath.

From

From the *Jews* accuſing our Saviour of Blaſphemy, it ſeems to follow, that tho' the *Jews* had very high Conceptions of the *Meſſiah*, and were confident, that when he came he would be a mighty Prince, and ſubdue all other Nations under his Feet; yet they never once imagined that he would be God, or in the ſtrict and ſublime Senſe of the Word, the Son of God, tho', in the very Prophecies, which as they themſelves acknowledge) relate to the *Meſſiah*, he is called *Immanuel*, Iſa. vii. 14. and elſewhere *the Mighty God*, *the Everlaſting Father*, *the Prince of Peace*, Iſa. ix. 6.

But to reſume our Hiſtory. What the Reſult of our Saviour's Defence before the *Sanhedrim* was, we cannot tell, becauſe none of the *Evangeliſts* have acquainted us: But the Sequel of the Hiſtory informs us, that it no Ways abated the Malice of the *Phariſees*; becauſe, on the very next Sabbath-Day, upon his Diſciples pulling ſome Ears of Corn, (as they paſſed through the Fields) rubbing them in their Hands, and ſo eating them, when they were hungry, they began again to clamour againſt this Violation of the Sabbath; until our Saviour, in Vindication of his Diſciples, both from the Example of *David* and his Attendants, (who eat the Shew-bread, which it was unlawful for the Laity to eat) when they were hungry, and from the Example of their own Prieſts, who performed the Work of the Temple on the Sabbath-day, endeavoured to convince them, that Works of Neceſſity were ſometimes permitted, even to the Breach of a ritual Command; that Acts of Mercy were the beſt and moſt acceptable Method of ſerving God upon any Day what

ever; that it was inverting the Order of Things, to ſuppoſe, that Man was made for the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath for the Benefit of Man: But if even it were not ſo, that he, as the Son of God, and conſequently Lord of the Sabbath, had a Power to diſpenſe with the ceremonial Laws concerning it.

Not long after this, our Saviour left *Jeruſalem*, and returned into *Galilee*, where, on another Sabbath-Day, while he was preaching, there ſtood before him a Man, whoſe Right-Hand was ſhrunk and withered; and when the Scribes and Phariſees inſidiouſly watched him, whether he would cure, or not, our Lord bid him ſtand up in the Midſt of the Aſſembly, as an Object of publick Commiſeration; and turning to theſe ſuperſtitious Obſervers of the Sabbath, put the Queſtion to them, Whether they *thought it lawful, on the Sabbath-Day, to do good or ill, actually to ſave Life, or negligently to deſtroy it?* And then, from their own Practice, in running to the Relief of any dumb Creature, on the Sabbath-Day, he fairly inferred, that whatever their hypocritical Pretences might be, they themſelves eſteemed it lawful to do Good on that Day; and ſo looking about him with ſome Marks of Indignation for their ſtrange Perverſeneſs, he commanded the poor Man to ſtretch out his lame Hand, and that very Moment it became as ſound as the other.

The *Phariſees*, however, tho' ſilenced by his Arguments, and ſurprized at his Miracles, would not ſurceaſe their Malice, but joined in Conſultation with the *Herodians* (tho' a Sect quite oppoſite to them in Principles) how they might take away his Life; which, when our Saviour underſtood, he

he withdrew, with his Diſciples, toward the Sea-ſide; But which Way ſoever he went, his Name was now grown ſo famous, that vaſt Multitudes, not only out of *Galilee*, but from *Jeruſalem*, from the Provinces of *Judea*, and *Idumæa*, and all the Country about *Jordan*, as far as the *Mediterranean-Sea*, to the Coaſts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, hearing the Report of his miraculous Power to cure all Diſeaſes with a Word of his Mouth, the Touch of his Hand, or barely the handling of his Garment, came with their Sick and Poſſeſſed for Help, and as faſt as they came, he cured them. Nay, to ſuch a Degree was his Fame increaſed, that the very Devils and unclean Spirits publickly confeſſed, that he was the Son of God, till, upon all Occaſions, they were reſtrained and compelled to Silence.

The following Remarks may ſerve to explain what Difficulties may occur in the preceding Relation.

What our Lord's Diſciples did, in pulling the Ears of Corn, could not be accounted any unjuſt Invaſion of another's Property, becauſe the Law had indulged them thus far; *When thou goeſt into thy Neighbour's Standing-corn, thou mayeſt pluck the Ears with thy Hand; but thou ſhalt not move a Sickle to thy Neighbour's Standing-corn*, Deut. xxiii. 25. It was not then for plucking the Ears of Corn, much leſs (as ſome ſay) for breaking their Faſts before they had celebrated the publick Offices, (which was contrary to the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, *Acts* ii. 15.) that the *Phariſees* took Exceptions to the Diſciples; but for plucking them on the Sabbath-Day, whereof they thought this Action (which at other Times was lawful enough) was a Violation, and accordingly our

Saviour's

Saviour's whole Vindication of them turns upon this Suppoſition.

There is ſomething very cogent in our Saviour's Argument, taken from *David*'s Practice, becauſe, according to the Conceſſion of the *Jews* themſelves, his Example contains two Things, tending to excuſe the Violation of the Sabbath. 1. That they ſuppoſe that *David* and his Men fled on the Sabbath-Day, and yet were not guilty of breaking the Reſt of the Sabbath; for *our Maſters think it lawful*, ſay they, *in him, whom the Gentiles, or Thieves purſue, to profane the Sabbath, by the Preſervation of his Life, even as* David, *when* Saul *purſued to kill him, fled and eſcaped.* 2. That their own Canons allowed the *Laity* to eat of the Shew-bread for the Preſervation of Life; for *it is a ſmall Thing*, ſay they, *to hold that it is lawful for us to eat of the Bread removed from the Table; it would be lawful for us, in the Extremity of Hunger, even to eat of the Bread, now ſanctified upon the Table, if there were no other.* And, indeed, this Opinion, that it was lawful to violate the Sabbath for Preſervation of Life, ſeems plainly to have obtained, before the Tranſlation of the *Septuagint*, who render the Words in *Exod.* xii. 16. to this Purpoſe, *Ye ſhall do no ſervile Work on it, but that which ſhall be done for the Safety of Life.*

The Shew-bread (which in *Hebrew* is literally *the Bread of Faces*) was ſo called, not becauſe it was ſet upon the golden Table, which was in the Sanctuary, but becauſe it was placed *before the Lord*, i. e. not far from the Ark of the Covenant, which was the Symbol of his more immediate Preſence. Theſe Loaves, according to the Number of the Tribes, were twelve: They were made four

four ſquare, covered over with Leaves of Gold, and were of a conſiderable Bigneſs, having about three Quarts of Flour in each. They were ſerved up hot every Sabbath-day, and at the ſame Time the ſtale ones, which had been expoſed the whole preceding Week, were taken away, and allowed to be eat by none but the Prieſts, and that only in the Holy Place, which was the *Tabernacle* at firſt, and afterwards the *Temple*, Lev. xxiv. 5, *&c.* and the Reaſon of this Inſtitution ſeems to have been, to repreſent, in a more lively Manner, to the People, God's Government and Preſence among them; that as the Tabernacle firſt, and then the *Temple*, was his Palace and Place of Reſidence, ſo theſe weekly Services of Bread, Wine and Salt (ſay the *Jews*) were to denote his Habitation among them, as if he had been an earthly Prince, for whom ſuch Proviſions were made.

There are ſome who pretend to infer from the Paſſage of St. *Mark*, Chap. ii. 27. that the Words in St. *Matthew*, *The Son of Man is Lord alſo of the Sabbath*, Chap. xii. 8. are of the ſame Import with, *The Sabbath was made for Man*; ſo that the Son of Man is here put for all Men in general, and conſequently the Senſe of the Words muſt be, that every one is Lord of the Sabbath, to obſerve or diſpence with it, according to the Call or Exigency of his Affairs. But beſides that, the Phraſe, *Son of Man*, which is uſed no leſs than eighty-eight Times in the *New Teſtament*, is in all other Places ſet to denote our bleſſed *Lord*; and in *Dan.* vii. 13. from whence it is originally taken, it is thought, by all antient *Jews*, as well as *Chriſtians*, to ſignify the *Meſſiah* only; it is plain that theſe two Paſſages are diſtinct Propoſi-

tions

tions in St. *Mark*, Chap. ii. 27, 28. and that they can relate to no other than our Saviour *Chriſt*, becauſe he tells the *Phariſees*, and therein means himſelf, that in that Place, *there was one greater than the Temple*, i. e. whoſe prophetick Office was of more Conſequence to the World, than the ſacerdotal Adminiſtration in the *Temple*, and ought therefore, leaſt of all, to be interrupted by a ſuperſtitious Obſervation of the Sabbath. *The Sabbath was made for Man* muſt therefore ſignify, that it was firſt appointed for the Good and Benefit of Man; and being ſo, it cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed, to oblige him to any Thing ſo contrary to Humanity, as ſtarving or debilitating his Nature; and therefore, as *the Son of Man came not to deſtroy Men's Lives, but to ſave them*, he muſt have Power, in ſuch Caſes as concern the Good and Welfare of Mankind, to diſpenſe with the ſtrict Reſt of the Sabbath which the Law required.

The Text, *Luke* vi. 9. is not contrary to what St. *Matthew*, Chap. xii. 10. tells us, *viz.* that *they asked him*, becauſe both are true. They asked him, *Whether it was lawful to heal?* and he, in Reply, ſays, *I alſo will ask you one Thing. Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do Good, or to do Evil?* Luke vi. 9. We are not, however, to ſuppoſe, that by doing Evil, our Saviour propounded to the *Phariſees*, Whether, on the Sabbath-day it was lawful to do that, which, on any other Day, is utterly unlawful; for then, without doubt, they would have had a ready Anſwer for him; but only whether, according to the Inſtitution of the Sabbath, it was lawful to do Good, or not to do it, to ſave Life, or not to ſave it, when a Man had it equally in his Power. And the Reaſon why our Saviour inſtances

ſtances in ſaving a Life is, becauſe it was a Maxim then among the *Jews*, that on the Sabbath-Day, all ſervile Work was prohibited, except where the Life of any Man or Beaſt was concerned; but the modern *Jews* are of a contrary Opinion, and in Hatred to *Chriſtians* (as *Grotius* thinks) have loaded the Obſervation of the Sabbath with ſuch trifling and ſuperſtitious Practices, as their Forefathers and antient Doctors never knew of.

Whether the *Herodians* were a particular Sect of Heretics, or only a Party or Faction among the *Jews*, Authors have not determined. Thoſe who account them of the former Kind, ſuppoſe them to be Perſons, who, to ingratiate themſelves with *Herod*, either the Father or Son, (for in that they are not agreed) maintained him to be the expected *Meſſiah*, and who, in their other religious Principles, very much reſembled the *Phariſees*; and therefore what St. *Matthew* calls the Leaven of the *Phariſees*, Chap. xvi. 6. St. *Mark* ſtiles the Leaven of *Herod*, Chap. viii. 15. But thoſe who ſuppoſe them to be only a Party, make them great Eſpouſers of *Herod*'s ſecular Intereſt, and Supporters of his new acquired Sovereignty; a Set of Politicians, who favoured the Dominion of *Herod* and the *Romans*, (in Oppoſition to the *Phariſees*, who were zealous for the Liberty of their Nation) and were therefore very active in preſſing the People to pay their Tribute to *Cæſar*, as the only Means to make *Herod* ſit eaſy on his Throne. For which Reaſon, perhaps, they might be called *Herodians*, or Royaliſts, as the other *Jews*, who were of the contrary Opinion, might properly be ſtiled Republicans.

It was a Direction which our Saviour gave to

his Diſciples, *when they perſecute you in this City, flee ye into another*, Matt. x. 23. and a Rule which himſelf put in Practice: For, when by his Doctrine and Miracles, he could do no Good upon Men, by Reaſon of *the Hardneſs of their Hearts*, Mark iii. 5. he uſually departed and retired, that he might give place to their Wrath, and ſecure himſelf from their Malice, *Matt.* xii. 15. and *John* viii. 59. From hence we may learn, that in ſuch Caſes, it is very lawful to conſult our Safety, for in concealing the Truth, we do not betray it, but rather comply with our Lord's Precept, *not to caſt Pearl before Swine*, Matt. vii. 6.

Though the Word *Idumæa* be no more than a *Greek* Name derived from the *Hebrew Edom*, yet it is not to be underſtood of the original Habitation of the *Edomites*, Mount *Seir*, but rather of that Southern Part of the Province of *Judea*, which, during the Captivity of the *Jews* at *Babylon*, being left deſtitute, or not ſufficiently inhabited by its Natives, ſeems to have been poſſeſſed by the neighbouring *Idumæans*. Theſe *Idumæans*, when afterwards conquered by the *Maccabees*, choſe rather to embrace the *Jewiſh* Religion, than to quit the Habitations they had taken Poſſeſſion of; and though, hereupon, they were incorporated into the Body of the *Jewiſh* Nation, yet that Tract of *Judæa*, which they inhabited, did not ſo ſoon loſe the Name of *Idumæa*, derived from them, but retained it, not only in our Saviour's Days, but for a conſiderable Time afterwards.

But to go on with our Narrative. Finding ſome Inconvenience in the Preſſure of the People, he ordered his Diſciples, for the Time to come, to

to have a ſmall Veſſel always in Readineſs, for him to ſtep into upon Occaſion; and ſo retired to a ſolitary Mountain, where he continued all Night in Prayer, intending next Morning to make an Election of ſome particular Perſons, both to be Witneſſes of his Actions and Diſcourſes, and after his Departure out of the World, his Vicegerents upon Earth, Founders of his Church, and Propagators of his Goſpel.

The Number of theſe, according to the Patriarchs, was Twelve; *Simon* (who is likewiſe named *Peter*) and *Andrew*, *James* (commonly called *the Great*) and *John*; *Philip* and *Bartholomew*; *Matthew* and *Thomas*; *James* (commonly called *the Leſs*) and *Simon* the *Canaanite*; *Jude* the Brother of *James*, and *Judas Iſcariot*, who ſo juſtly deſerved the Title of Traytor. To theſe he gave the Name of Apoſtles; and as he perceived the Multitude gathering round him, theſe he called nearer than the reſt to him, and began that moſt excellent Diſcourſe which comprizes all the great Principles of the *Chriſtian* Religion, and is commonly called the *Sermon on the Mount*.

Herein he pronounces diverſe Bleſſings, both Spiritual and Temporal, to ſuch as the Generality of the World eſteemed Miſerable; to the Poor in Spirit, or humble minded; to the Kind and Merciful; to the pious Mourners; to the Peacemakers; to the Meek and Patient; to the pure in Heart; to ſuch as hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs; and to ſuch as are perſecuted upon the Account thereof. Herein he inſtructs the Apoſtles, more eſpecially in their Duty; and in ſeveral Compariſons ſetting before them the high Station, wherein he had ſo lately placed them, and

how much it would redound to their Honour, if they behaved well, and to their Diſhonour, if otherwiſe; he recommends, above all other Things, Purity of Life and Converſation. Herein he expounds the true Meaning, and ſhews the juſt Extent of ſeveral moral Precepts, *viz.* The Laws againſt Murther, againſt Adultery, againſt Perjury; that concerning Retaliation, and that of loving our Neighbour; and reſcues them from the wretched Gloſſes and Interpretations which the *Jews* had put upon them. Herein he explains and teaches the proper Method of performing, with Acceptance, the ſeveral Duties of Charity to the Poor, Prayer and Faſting. Herein he diſſuades us from all covetous Inclinations, and anxious Thoughts concerning the Things of this World, from a Conſciouſneſs of our being under the providential Care of God: And having laid down ſeveral other Precepts and Inſtructions, he concludes the Whole with this Admonition, *That whoever heard, believed and practiſed the Things contained in his Diſcourſes, would, in the Event, be like a wiſe Builder, who laid the Foundation of his Houſe upon a Rock, not to be affected by Wind or Weather; but that he, who heard and practiſed them not, would be like a Man, who built his Houſe upon the Sand, ſoon to be blown down by the Winds, and waſhed away by the Floods.*

This Sermon was delivered with ſuch a Grace and Majeſty, as gained the Applauſe of the whole Audience, and made them very readily declare their Senſe of the Difference between ſuch divine Diſcourſes, and the jejune Harangues of their ordinary Teachers the *Scribes*; and to confirm his Doctrine by the Teſtimony of Miracles, our bleſſed

bleſſed Saviour, upon his Deſcent from the Mount, healed a Leper, and then remitted him to the Prieſt, to make his Oblation in Acknowledgement of his Cure.

Let us explain ſome Things we have been relating.

Some have thought that the *Greek* Words for *He went out into a Mountain to pray*, ſhould be rendered *in a Houſe of Prayer of God*, or in a *Synagogue* dedicated to the Service of God; but then they will be concerned to find out any Houſe of Prayer, which at that Time ſtood on a Mountain, or any, except the Temple, which was called by that Name: Nor can we conceive why our Lord ſhould go out into a Mountain to pray, if it were not for the Privacy and Retirement of it, which he could not have had in any common Place of divine Worſhip. Our Saviour, however, being about to ſend out his twelve Apoſtles, thought that ſo great a Work as could not be done, without offering up his ſolemn Addreſſes to God, for their Succeſs; and accordingly having found out a Place of Retirement, he thither betook himſelf, and, as the *Evangeliſts* inform us, continued all Night in Prayer, leaving the Biſhops and Governors of his Church an Example what they are to do in the great and momentous Affair of appointing Perſons to the Miniſtry of the Goſpel.

Theſe two Brothers, *James* and *John*, our Saviour calls *Boanerges*, a Word compoſed of two *Hebrew* or *Syriac* Words, but what have ſuffered ſome Alteration in their paſſing into the *Greek* Language. For whether it be, that the *Greek* Tranſcriber has miſtaken them, or that this might be the corrupt Way of pronouncing them in *Galilee*,

lilee, certain it is, that the Original are *Benei Rehem*, denoting *Son of Thunder*, or *of a Tempeſt*, a Name given them in Alluſion to the natural Heat and Zeal of their Temper, and that Vehemence and Efficacy wherewith our Saviour foreſaw that they would preach the Goſpel. Of the former of theſe they gave an early Inſtance, in their Deſire to *call down Fire from Heaven* to conſume the *Samaritans*, Luke ix. 54. And in the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, we find that *Peter* and *John* are the chief Actors and Speakers in the Defence and Propagation of the Goſpel; and that the Zeal of *James* and *Peter* ſeems to be the Reaſon, why the one was ſlain by *Herod*, and the other impriſoned, in order to the like Execution.

The Name given here to the Apoſtle *Bartholomew*, is not his proper but patronymical Name, and imports only the Son of *Tholomew*, or *Tolmai*: So that we are ſtill at a Loſs for his perſonal Name, unleſs we will admit of the Conjecture, that he was indeed no other than *Nathanael*. To this Purpoſe, it is remarkable, 1ſt, That as no other *Evangeliſt* make mention of *Nathanael*, but St. *John*, ſo he never once makes mention of *Bartholomew*. 2dly, That in the Catalogue of the Apoſtles, *Philip* and *Bartholomew* are always coupled together, and were, very probably, ſent out to preach the Goſpel: And fit Companions they were, ſuppoſing *Nathanael* to be the Man, with whom, it is plain, that *Philip* had an Intimacy, and was the firſt Inſtrument of bringing him to *Jeſus*. 3dly, That this *Nathanael* is, by St. *John*, Chap. xxi. 2. named in Company with ſeveral of the Apoſtles, upon our Saviour's ſhewing himſelf at the Sea of *Tiberias*, after his Reſurrection, which the *Evan-*

geliſt tells us, was the third Time of his doing ſo, Ver. 14. and this is ſome Preſumption that he was of them. 4thly, That at the two former Times, 'tis expreſly ſaid that he appeared to the Eleven, *John* xx. 19, 26. And here, at the third Time of his Appearance, thoſe that are named with *Nathanael*, are all of that Number. From theſe Conſiderations it is more than probable, that *Nathanael* was one of the Apoſtles; which can only be accounted for, by ſuppoſing that St. *John* calls the ſame Perſon by his proper Name *Nathaniel*, whom the other *Evangeliſt* calls by his patronymical, *Bartholomew*.

Thomas, in *Hebrew*, or *Syriac* either, ſignifies a *Twin*, and ſo is the ſame with *Didymus*, that other Name whereby this Apoſtle is ſometimes called.

Some are of Opinion, that *Simon* is here called the *Canaanite* from *Cana*, a little Town in *Galilee*, the Place of his Birth and Habitation; but others rather think, that ſince this Apoſtle is, by St. *Luke*, Chap. vi. 15. called *Zelotes*. The *Canaanites* and *Zelotes* are perfectly the ſame, juſt as *Cephas* and *Peter*, *Tabitha* and *Dorcas* are. That there was a Faction among the *Jews*, a little before the Deſtruction of their City and Nation, who aſſumed to themſelves the Title of *Zealots* (out of an hypocrytical Oſtentation of Holineſs, tho', at the ſame Time, in their Hearts and Practices they were the lewdeſt of Men) *Joſephus* gives us a large and lamentable Account; but whether that Faction was in the Beginning of our Saviour's Time, or whether to be of the Number of Zealots, as the Hiſtorian has deſcribed, may not be an Injury and Reproach to this Apoſtle's Memory, is much to be doubted.

The

The Surname of *Judas*, namely, *Iſcariot*, may be taken either from the Place of his Birth, which was *Carioth*, in the Tribe of *Iſſachar*, whereof we have Mention in *Joſh.* xv. 25. and *Amos* xi. 2. or from the *Syriac* Word *Secariat*, denoting the *Purſe* or *Wallet*, which it was the Office of this *Judas* to carry; or from the Word *Aſhara* or *Iſcara*, which ſignifies to *ſtrangle*; and therefore a Name which the *Evangeliſts* might give him after his Death: But all theſe Etymologies are no more than mere Conjectures.

The Wiſdom of *Chriſt* ſaw fit to admit *Judas* into the Number of his Diſciples, that by him the Counſel of God, in giving up his Son to Death, and the Predictions of the Prophtes might be fulfilled, *Acts* i. 16. This very Perſon, however, is by our Lord ſent to preach the Goſpel, to cure Diſeaſes, and to caſt out Devils, who had *himſelf a Devil*, John vi. 70. thereby to teach us that the Miſſion of a Perſon may be valid, tho' he be not ſanctified, that in Things belonging to the miniſterial Office, we ſhould hearken, even to ſuch Perſons, and obey them.

The *Greek* Word for *Apoſtle*, ſignifies an *Envoy*, and was a Name given by the *Jews* to any Meſſenger in general, but more eſpecially to ſuch Perſons as were ſent by the High-prieſt and Heads of the People, to collect the Tithes and other Dues belonging to the *Temple* or *Synagogue*, or to carry their Orders and Mandates to the Cities and Provinces, when any Affairs, relating to Religion, were tranſacted; and to this Cuſtom St. *Paul* ſeems to allude, where he ſtiles himſelf *an Apoſtle, not of Man, neither by Man, but of* Jeſus Chriſt, *Gal.* v. 1. Our Saviour, indeed, as he was no Lover of Innovations, took the Word

from

from among the *Jews*; but then he raiſed it to a much higher and more honourable Signification; for himſelf declares, that he ſent out his Apoſtles, even as his Father ſent out him, *John* xx. 21. *i.e.* with a full Commiſſion to act in his ſtead, even as he did in God's: And accordingly we may obſerve, that as the Father gave Judgment to the Son, *John* v. 22. ſo in Effect, the Son gives Judgment to the Apoſtles, *Matth.* xix. 28. *Luke* xxii. 30. and 2 *Cor.* x. 6. that, as the Father gave the Son Power to forgive Sins upon Earth, *Matt.* x. 6. ſo the Son gives Power to the Apoſtles to remit Sins on Earth likewiſe, *John* xx. 23. that as the Father gave the Son the Honour to ſit down with him on his Throne, ſo the Son gave the Apoſtles the Privilege to ſit with him on Thrones, *Matth.* ix. 28. and *Luke* xxi. 30. and that, as the Father gave the Son to be the Foundation or Corner-ſtone of the Church, *Matth.* xx. 42. ſo the Son gave the Apoſtles to be Foundations upon a Foundation, for ſo the Church is ſaid to be built upon the *Foundation of the Apoſtles*, Chriſt *being the chief Corner-ſtone*, Eph. ii. 20.

The Mountain, where our Lord delivered his Diſcourſe is generally ſuppoſed to be *Tabor*; for, by comparing St. *Mark*, Chap. xxxvii. 12. with the other Evangeliſts, *Matth.* xii. 14, 15 and *Luke* vi. 12, *&c.* we may perceive, that it was not far diſtant from ſome part of the Sea of *Tiberias*, whither our Lord had retired very lately from the *Phariſees*, and about five or ſix Leagues from *Capernaum*, whither he returned after his Deſcent from this Mount. But then the Queſtion is, whether this Sermon be the ſame with what we find recorded by St. *Luke*, Chap. vi. 12? Now, in order to reſolve this, we may obſerve, *firſt*,

that the Sermon in St. *Matthew* was delivered before the healing of the Leper, Chap. viii. 2. whereas St. *Luke*, who promiſes to diſcourſe in order of what *Chriſt* did, gives us firſt the Story of the Leper, Chap. v. 12. and then an Account of *Chriſt*'s Sermon, Chap. vi. 17. 2*dly*, That the Sermon in St. *Matthew*, our Lord preached on the Mount, and called his Diſciples up to him, whereas St. *Luke* informs us, that our Lord came down with his Diſciples from a Mount, and ſtood in the Plain, and from thence preached what he recorded, ver. 17. And 3*dly*, That St. *Luke* omits the much greater Part of the Sermon, as it is recorded by St. *Matthew*, mentions only four Beatitudes, whereas St. *Matthew* ſpeaks of Eight, and has added four Woes, ver. 24, *&c.* whereof we find no Indications in St. *Matthew*. Since the Sermons then are ſo very different in their Matter, as well as in the Circumſtances of Time and Place, 'tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that they are not the ſame; tho' conſidering, that after both the Sermons, we find our Lord returning to *Capernaum*, and healing the Centurion's Servant, *Matth.* viii. 5. and *Luke* vii. 1. we may probably conjecture, that he ſpake the Sermon in St. *Matthew*, whilſt he was ſitting on the Mount, to his Diſciples; but that, in St. *Luke*, he afterwards ſpake, when he came down into the Plain, Chap. vi. 17. in the Audience of all the People, Chap. vii. 1.

The Words in the Text, *He taught them as one that had Authority, and not as the Scribes*, Matt. vii. 29. But they certainly are miſtaken, who interpret the Words in this Senſe,——"He taught "them as the Author of the Doctrine which he "preached, as one, who had Authority in his "own Name to propound the Terms of Life and "Death,

"Death," becauſe it is not only contrary to the Nature of his prophetick Office, but to his own frequent Declarations, that the *Doctrine, which he taught, was not his own, but his who ſent him; and that he ſpake, not of himſelf, or in his own Name, but as he had heard from his Father, and as he had commanded him to ſpeak*, John vii. 16, 17, 18. viii. 28. xii. 49. xiv. 10. and therefore the true Interpretation is, what *Lightfoot*, and others give us, *viz. That he ſpake as a Prophet, having Authority from God to deliver his Meſſage to them*, and not as the Scribes, who pretended *only to deliver the Traditions of their Foreſathers, and to teach them no more, than what they had learned from* Hillel, Shemaia, Abtalion, *&c.*

Let us now reſume the Hiſtory. At his return to *Capernaum* he cured, at a Diſtance, the favourite Servant of the *Roman* Centurion, who had made an ample Declaration of his Divine Power, and thereupon received from him as ample a Commendation of his Faith; and, at his Arrival at the Gates of *Nain*, he reſtored to Life a Widow's only Son, as the People were carrying him out to his Funeral, to the great Joy and Comfort of his Parent, and the no leſs Wonder and Aſtoniſhment of the Spectators, who, upon this Occaſion, glorified God, and publickly declared, that *a mighty Prophet was ſprung up among them, and that God had viſited his People.*

Upon the Fame of this, and ſeveral other Miracles, which our Saviour did daily, *John the Baptiſt*, who was ſtill in Priſon, ſent two of his Diſciples to enquire of him, whether he himſelf was the promiſed *Meſſiah*, or ſome other Perſon was to appear in that Character? As our Lord was at that

Time working many Miracles, curing the Deaf, the Lame, the Blind, *&c.* And inſtructing the People that were gathered about him, inſtead of giving a direct Anſwer to their Queſtion, he bad them go, and report what they ſaw to their Maſter; and, when he had thus diſmiſſed them, he began to diſcourſe to the People concerning *John*, giving a large Encomium of the Auſterity and Holineſs of his Perſon, the Greatneſs of his Function, and Divinity of his Commiſſion; and hence taking Occaſion to blame the Perverſeneſs of the Age, in rejecting both his and the *Baptiſt*'s Teſtimony, (tho' the *Baptiſt* was a Man of a mortified Deportment, and he a Perſon of a free and affable Behaviour, ſo that nothing would pleaſe them) he proceeded to upbraid the ſeveral Cities, where moſt of his Miracles had been wrought, *viz. Chorazim*, *Bethſaida*, and, more eſpecially, *Capernaum*, with their Obſtinacy and Impenitence; and having declared, that the Myſteries of the *Goſpel-Revelation* were better adapted to the Humble and Modeſt, than to the Proud and Worldly-wiſe, he concludes his Diſcourſe with an Exhortation to ſuch as were thus qualified to he his Diſciples, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Reſt*, &c.

No ſooner had he finiſhed this Diſcourſe, but a rich *Phariſee*, whoſe Name was *Simon*, invited him to Dinner; but, while he was at Table, there happened an Incident ſomewhat remarkable: For a certain Woman, who, not long before, had been noted for a lewd Liver, came into the Houſe, and throwing herſelf at the Feet of *Jeſus*, waſhed them with the Tears which flowed from her Eyes, and then, having wiped them with her Hair, ſhe kiſſed them,

them, and anointed them with very precious Ointment,

Simon, who ſtill retained ſomething of the cenſorious Spirit of his Sect, ſeeing this Woman thus buſy in expreſſing her Love and Veneration for *Jeſus*, began to think within himſelf, that he could not poſſibly be a Prophet, otherwiſe he would have known the Woman to be infamous, and conſequently, not ſuffered her to touch him: But our Saviour, who well underſtood *Simon*'s Thoughts, propoſed to him a Parable of a certain Creditor, who had two Debtors, one of which owed him ten times as much as the other, but, becauſe both of them were inſolvent, he frankly forgave them both; and then, gaining from him a Confeſſion, that the Debtor, to whom the larger Sum was forgiven, would in Gratitude be bound to love the Creditor moſt, he turned to the Woman, and (by way of Application) not only apologized both for her Behaviour and his own, but reproached his Hoſt likewiſe, for having omitted ſome Inſtances of Reſpect and Civility, which this contemptible Woman (as he eſteemed her) had abundantly ſupplied. And therefore, in Return for ſuch uncommon Kindneſs, he gave her a full Pardon and Abſolution of all her Sins, which ſome in the Company ſeemed to reſent, as an Invaſion of the Divine Prerogative, but that gave him no manner of Uneaſineſs.

Upon his leaving *Nain*, he made a Progreſs, for ſome Months, round other Parts of *Galilee*, accompanied with his Apoſtles, and ſeveral devout Women, whom he had cured of ſundry Diſeaſes, and who, in Gratitude, attended his Perſon, and out of their own Subſtance adminiſtered to his Neceſſities;

Neceſſities; till returning, at Length, to his own City, *Capernaum*, ſuch Multitudes of People, upon the Rumour of his being come again, reſorted to him, that neither he, nor his Diſciples could find Time to eat: But *his Meat was to do the Will of God*, by healing the Sick, and relieving the Oppreſſed; and therefore, as ſoon as a poor *Demoniack*, both blind and dumb, was brought before him, he immediately reſtored him both to his Speech and Eye-ſight, inſomuch that all who ſaw it were greatly aſtoniſhed; and, with a general Voice, declared, that the Perſon who did ſuch wonderful Works, could be no other than the promiſed *Meſſiah*.

The *Phariſees* however, and Doctors of the Law, who came from *Jeruſalem*, gave another Turn to this Miracle: They aſcribed it to the Power of the Devil, even to *Beelzebub*, the Chief of the Devils; and therefore our bleſſed Saviour, by the Compariſon of a Kingdom or Houſe divided againſt itſelf (which is the readieſt way to bring it to Deſolation) ſhews the Abſurdity of their Allegations, ſince, by that Means, the Devil would take the moſt effectual Courſe to deſtroy his own Empire. Nay, he argues from their own Pretenſions of having certain allowed *Exorciſts* among them, that evil Spirits might be caſt out by the Finger of God; that, when they were apparently ſo, 'twas very manifeſt, that the Kingdom of God or the *Meſſiah*, was come among them; that obſtinately to reſiſt the Evidence of ſuch Miracles, or to aſcribe them to a diabolical Power, was that *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, which is of a Nature unpardonable; and that, ſince they had been ſo impious, as to blaſpheme the Holy Spirit,

Spirit, by which he wrought them, nothing leſs could be expected, than that the Devils, ejected by him, finding no where among the *Heathens* ſuch deſirable Habitations of Reſt and Contentment, as among them, would endeavour to return, with ſeveral others worſe than themſelves, and, by their prodigious Wickedneſs and obſtinate Infidelity, finding them more prepared than ever to receive them, would there take up their ſettled Abode, and having made them more incredulous and obdurate, more impure and wicked, more hypocritical and blaſphemous, than they were before, would bring upon them too a more lamentable Deſtruction.

All this however hindered not the Scribes and *Phariſees* from demanding of our Saviour ſome new Sign or Miracle, in Evidence of his Miſſion; but as he had given them a ſufficient Number of theſe already, he only referred them to one, that would not come to paſs till after his Death, namely, that of *Jonas*, whoſe Deliverance from the Whale's Belly, after three Days Confinement, was an eminent Type of his Reſurrection, after as long a Continuance of his Body in the Bowels of the Earth; and thence took Occaſion to remind them, that the Inhabitants of *Nineveh*, a Pagan City, and alſo the Queen of *Sheba*, ſhould riſe up in Judgment againſt that Generation, and condemn it, becauſe the former repented at the Preaching of *Jonas*, and the latter took a vaſt Journey to partake of the Benefits of *Solomon*'s Wiſdom, whereas they refuſed to hearken to one, who was inconteſtibly greater than either *Jonas* or *Solomon*.

While he was continuing his Diſcourſe in this manner, Word was brought, that his Mother and ſome other Kinsfolk were at the Door, deſiring to

ſpeak

ſpeak with him (for, fearing either that he might be too much tranſported by his Miniſtry, or grow faint for want of eating, or be endangered by the Throng, they came to get him away) but, being diſſatisfied with their unſeaſonable Interruption, he took Occaſion to inform the Audience, that all worldly Relations were of leſs Conſideration, than the Ties of Duty and Religion; that the Names of Mother and Brother, which are ſanctified by the Laws of God and Nature, were made much more ſacred, when a ſpiritual Kindred does ſupervene; and ſo turning to his Diſciples, he declared, that they were his trueſt Relations, *who heard the Word of God, and practiſed it.*

The ſame Day he went out of the Houſe where he commonly abode, and, for the greater Conveniency of teaching the People, repaired to the Sea-ſhore, where, being followed by the ſame Multitudes, to avoid the Throng he went on board a Veſſel, and from thence taught them in Parables, an uſual way of Inſtruction among the *Jews*, but what he had not practiſed before, thereby to engage the Attention and accomodate himſelf to the Capacity of thoſe that heard him. By the Parable of the Sower, he repreſented the different Succeſſes of the Goſpel, according to the different Diſpoſitions of its Hearers; by the Tares growing among the good Seed, the Mixture of the Wicked and Godly under the ſame Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*; by the Grain of Muſtard-ſeed, and the little Piece of Leaven, the wonderful Increaſe and Propagation of the Goſpel from ſmall Beginnings; by the Treaſure in the Field, and the Pearl of great Price, the ineſtimable Benefits, that would accrue to the true Profeſſors of Religion; but that the Profeſſion of it would include a mixt Multi-

tude,

tude, and therefore like a Net, caſt into the Sea, which incloſes Fiſhes of all kinds, ſome good, and ſome bad, the Good to be preſerved, but the Bad caſt away. This is the Explication which our Lord gave his Diſciples of theſe ſeveral Parables; and when, by their Anſwer, he perceived that they underſtood them all, he concluded his Diſcourſe with one Similitude more, *viz.* That *every Goſpel-Teacher ought to reſemble a well furniſhed Houſe-keeper, who brings all Things out of his Repoſitory, both old and new, according to the Occaſions of his Gueſts.*

It will be now proper to make Remarks on what we have juſt now related.

A *Centurion* was an Officer commanding an hundred Men, much of the ſame Rank and Station of one of our Captains, and belonged to the *Iron Legion* (as it was called) which uſually quartered in *Judea.*

Naim, or *Nain,* ſo called for the Pleaſantneſs of its Situation, was a Town of *Galilee,* about two Leagues from *Nazareth,* and not ſo much from Mount *Tabor,* between which and the City ran the River *Kiſon:* And from our Saviour's meeting the Funeral coming out at the Gates, we may learn, that it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews* to bury their Dead out of the City, becauſe they looked upon their Graves, as Places full of Pollution; whereas we *Chriſtians,* in hopes of a joyful Reſurrection, and upon Preſumption that many of thoſe, whoſe Bodies are repoſited in the Earth, are in a State of Felicity in Heaven, look upon theſe Places with great Reſpect and Veneration, and accordingly have our Tombs erected always very near, and ſometimes within the Body of our Churches.

The People of *Naim* do, *Luke* vii. 16. acknowledge *Jesus* to be the *Messiah*, or that great Prophet, whom *Moses* had promised to the *Jews*: *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken*, Deut. xviii. 15. for they describe this Prophet in the very same Terms, that *Zacharias*, the Father of *John the Baptist*, makes use of to denote the *Messiah*, *The Lord hath visited his People*, Luke i. 68.

The Words in the Text, *Art thou he that should come*, or rather, *he that is coming?* For the Prophecies of the *Messiah* in the *Old Testament* were so plain, and yet his Person or Name so unknown to the *Jews*, that they were wont to express it by some Circumlocution, and more especially by this of *he that cometh*, for so he is termed, *Matth.* iii. 11. xxi. 9. *Luke* vii. 20. xix. 38. *John* xii. 13. and *Heb.* x. 37, *&c.* and this Name they gathered from *Habakkuk*, where he is called, *he that shall come*, Chap. ii. 3. and from *Daniel*, where he is stiled, *he that cometh with the Clouds of Heaven*, Chap. vii. 13.

If it be asked, How the seeing of these Things done by our Saviour could be a sufficient Argument to *John*'s Disciples, that he was, in Truth, the *Messiah?* the Reply is, that the Performance of these Things was exactly answering the Character which the Prophet had given the *Messiah*, *viz.* That *at the Coming of God to save them, the Eyes of the Blind should be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf unstopped*; that *the Lame should leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb should sing*, *Isaiah* xxxv. 4, *&c.* And therefore, instead of giving them a direct Answer, which might be liable

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to the old Objection of his *bearing Record of himſelf*, John viii. 13. our Saviour refers them to the Miracles they ſaw him do; Miracles of the ſame kind that were predicted of the *Meſſiah*, and then leaves it to their own Maſter to draw the Concluſions from thence; which was a Method of Conviction more ſhort and ſtrong, and withal more agreeable to our Saviour's Modeſty and great Humility, than any long Detail of Arguments would have proved.

Maimonides obſerves, that tho' the *Jews* generally reckon eleven Degrees of Prophecy, yet two of theſe were ſomething more ſublime and excellent than ordinary Prophecy. The one of theſe was what they called the *Gradus Moſaicus*, when the Prophet had a familiar Converſe with God upon all Occaſions; and the other, when he had Revelations, not from a Dream or Extaſy, but an immediate Dictate of the Holy Ghoſt. Of this ſort was *John the Baptiſt*, who was plainly told by the Father, *Matth.* iii. 17. *John* xiii. 3. and as plainly proclaimed it to others, that Jeſus *was the Lamb of God*. Other Prophets ſpeak of the Coming of *Chriſt*, but then they did it in a dark and obſcure manner: They ſaw him only at a Diſtance, in a Dream, or in a Viſion of the Night, and couched their Predictions under a Veil of enigmatical Phraſes; but the *Baptiſt* ſpake of him openly and diſtinctly. He knew him; he was converſant with him; he pointed him out to the People; he had, in ſhort, the Honour of baptizing him, and hearing the Voice from Heaven teſtifying of him, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed*. And upon theſe Accounts we find him called a great and illuſtrious Perſon, *Luke* i. 15.

one *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*; and, by way of Excellence, *the Prophet of the Moſt High*, ver. 16.

The Words of our Saviour, *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented*, *Matth.* xi. 17. ſeem to be a Proverb, founded upon a Cuſtom among the *Jewiſh* Children, to imitate what they ſaw done by others upon greater Occaſions, and particularly the Cuſtom in Feſtivities or Funerals; when, in the former, as ſoon as the Muſician ſtruck up a Tune, the Company began to dance to his Pipe; and, in the latter, as ſoon as ſome old Women had begun the mournful Song, the reſt followed, lamenting, and beating their Breaſts. Theſe the Children were uſed to act, and perſonate in the Streets at play; and when one had begun the Muſician's Part, and another the old Woman's Part, and the reſt did not follow them in theirs, this gave Occaſion to the proverbial Saying, which our Saviour applies to the preſent Purpoſe in this Senſe; "I, and *John*, have both of us invited you "to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, or to turn "to God by Repentance: *John*, by the Auſterity "of his Life, and I, by my Affability and Courteſy, "have endeavoured to recommend ourſelves; but "all to no Purpoſe. You will neither mourn "with him, nor laugh with me; but, for that "very Reaſon, cenſure and revile our different "Behaviour, accounting him, for his reſerved "Temper, no better than a melancholy kind of "Madman; and me, for my open and free Converſation, a mere Glutton and Winebibber."

To come unto Chriſt, in the Phraſe of the *New Teſtament*, is to believe in him, and to become one of his Diſciples; and this Invitation our Saviour gives to all Mankind in general, and to the

Jews

Jews in particular. To all Mankind, foraſmuch as all, without the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, are heavy laden with the Burden of their Sins, and the Calamities incident to Life; are ſurrounded with a Cloud of Ignorance, and held in Bondage through the Fear of Death: And to the *Jews* in particular, foraſmuch as they, under their Diſpenſation, were oppreſſed with a Load of Ceremonies, *a Yoke, which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear*, Acts xv. 10. beſides the additional Weight, which the *Phariſees* laid upon them, by their Traditions, *heavy Burdens, and grievous to be born*, *Matth.* xviii. 4.

It is not a little ſtrange, that any Interpreters ſhould ever imagine, that the Story of a rich *Phariſee* inviting our Saviour to Dinner, as related by St. *Luke*, ſhould be the ſame with what related in *Matth.* xxvi. *Mark* xv. and *John* xii. ſince the Hiſtories agree ſcarce in any Thing, unleſs it be in bringing the *Alabaſter Box of Ointment*, and *anointing* our Saviour's Feet, which, in theſe Countries, eſpecially at great Entertainments, was no uncommon Thing. But now the Anointing, in the other *Evangeliſts*, was done at *Bethany*, within two Miles of *Jeruſalem*; *this*, in St. *Luke*, in *Galilee*; *that*, in the Houſe of one *Simon the Leper*; *this*, in the Houſe of one *Simon a Phariſee*; *that*, but a little before our Saviour's Paſſion; *this*, a conſiderable Time before it. At *that*, *Judas* was offended for the Waſte of the Ointment; at *this*, *Simon* for the Woman's touching our Saviour: Upon *that* Occaſion our Lord vindicates the Woman from one Head of Argument, and upon *this* from another. So that all Circumſtances make it plain, that theſe were different Actions, done by different Perſons, and at different Times.

Who

Who this Woman was, the Goſpel no where tells us. We read indeed of three Perſons, who, by ſeveral *Evangeliſts*, are ſaid to have anointed our Lord's Head and Feet, *viz. Mary Magdalene*, *Mary* the Siſter of *Lazarus*, and this other Woman, whom St. *Luke* calls *a Sinner*: And ſome Commentators make theſe three to be one and the ſame Perſon. It is to be obſerved however, that the Siſter of *Lazarus* is, all along, repreſented as a Perſon of great Sobriety and Virtue, who always lived at *Bethany*, was none of our Lord's Attendants, nor ever came into *Galilee*; and, conſequently, was a Woman diſtinct from *Mary Magdalene*, who was of his Retinue. *Luke* viii. 2. and from this other Woman, who anointed his Feet in *Simon's* Houſe: But, whether this *Mary Magdalene*, and this Woman, here called *a Sinner*, might not be the ſame Perſon, is not ſo eaſy to determine. The Characteriſtick of *Magdalene* is, that ſhe was the Perſon, *out of whom our Lord had caſt ſeven Devils*; but then, if the Ejection of theſe Devils be underſtood (as ſome will have it) in an allegorical Senſe, the Words will well ſuit with the Sinner in St. *Luke*; or, ſuppoſe they were real Devils, the Ejection of them might be ſome Time before her coming into *Simon's* Houſe, and (as our Saviour's Vindication of her ſeems to imply) her Reformation conſequent thereupon, though *Simon* knew nothing of it. For theſe Reaſons ſome have imagined, that the *Sinner* in St. *Luke*, and *Mary Magdalene*, were both the ſame Perſon; and that ſhe was called *Magdalene*, from the Town and Caſtle of *Magdal*, where her Husband, who had been a Man of great Diſtinction, but then dead, had lately his Habitation. It muſt not be diſſembled however, that the moſt general and prevail-

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ing Opinion is, that theſe were two different and diſtinct Women.

The manner of the *Eaſtern* People was to lie upon a kind of Bed or Couch, while they were at Meat; to put off their Sandals before they lay down, and to have their Servants and Domeſticks ſtand behind at their Feet; ſo that this Woman wanted not an Opportunity to expreſs her Devotion to our Lord, while he was in this Poſture.

That it was a cuſtomary Thing among the Ancients, eſpecially at great Entertainments, to uſe Ointments and coſtly Perfumes, appears from ſeveral Authorities. The *Pſalmiſt* plainly informs us, that this was the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, when, in Acknowledgment of God's great Bounty to him, he declares, *Thou haſt prepared a Table for me, thou haſt anointed my Head with Oil, and my Cup ſhall be full*, Pſal. xxiii. 5. The *Scholiaſt* upon *Ariſtophanes* acquaints us with the ſame Cuſtom among the *Greeks*, when he makes it a Rule, that *they who invite to an Entertainment, ſhould bring forth to their Gueſts Crowns and Ointments.* The general Cuſtom indeed, upon theſe Occaſions, was to anoint the Head, and very ſeldom the Feet: But, beſides that the latter was a Token of more Humility, and no leſs Eſteem in this Woman, ſhe could not perhaps have an Opportunity of coming at our Saviour's Head, without giving ſome Diſturbance to the Company.

Tho' the *Jewiſh* Religion permitted Harlots of their own Nation to enjoy all the Privileges of other Women, except that their Oblations were rejected as impure, yet the *Phariſees*, who pretended to a greater Degree of Sanctity than others, would not admit them to civil Uſage, or the common

common Benefits of Societ . and thought Religion itſelf, and the Honou. of every Prophet, concerned in this Preciſeneſs. This was the Reaſon of *Simon*'s making this Objection within himſelf: But therein he draws three falſe Concluſions, *firſt*, That had *Jeſus* been a Prophet, he muſt have known what the Woman was; as if Prophets knew every Thing, and were able to look into the Secrets of the Heart. *2dly*, That, as this Woman was a Sinner, our Saviour ſhould not have ſuffered her to touch him; as if the external Touch of a Perſon, engaged in any vicious Courſe, could communicate Pollution to one that was innocent. And *3dly*, That this Woman, whom he knew to be a Sinner ſome Time before, was ſtill in the ſame Condition; as if it were not in the Power of God, at any Time, to touch the Heart, and, in a Moment, to inſpire ſincere Repentance.

It was cuſtomary, ſays St. *Jerom*, on *Matth.* xxvii, 55. among the *Jews*, for Women, and eſpecially for Widows, to miniſter Neceſſaries to their Teachers, and this without any Scandal or Imputation upon their Honour. Our Saviour lays it down as a general Rule, that *the Labourer is worthy of his Hire*, Luke x. 7. and the Apoſtle accounts it no more than Juſtice, that they who *ſow* to others *ſpiritual Things*, ſhould be allowed to reap their *carnal*, 1 Cor. ix. 11. Of what Condition or Quality theſe Women were, that attended our Lord, we are not told: They might be Virgins, Widows, or Wives, who had an Allowance for themſelves from their Husbands: However, it could be no Injuſtice done to their Families, to give unto him, who was Lord of all that they, and their Husbands poſſeſſed; and who, *tho'*

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St. Matthias chosen an Apostle in the room of Judas the Traytor. Acts 1.25.

he was rich, yet, for our ſakes, became poor, that we, through his Poverty, might be rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9.

That which made the *Phariſees* thus calumniate our Saviour's Miracles, was their finding the People induced by them to believe, that he was the *Son of* David, *Matth.* xii. 23. which was but another Word for the *Meſſiah*, the *King of the* Jews. For, tho' they might have ſome Apprehenſions, that if this Belief obtained, it might poſſibly bring the Power of the *Romans* upon them, *John* ix. 48. yet their chief Fear was, that the Greatneſs of his Miracles, and Excellence of his Doctrine, would put an End to their Credit and Authority among the People, ſince they were conſcious to themſelves, that they could not vye with him in either.

By ſeveral Paſſages in the *Goſpel*, it ſeems evident, that the *Jews*, at this Time, had a Notion of a kind of Empire, and Subordination among the infernal Powers, and that the Prince of this Empire was called *Beelzebub*. *Beelzebub* ſignifies properly the *God of Flies*; but why a Name of ſo mean an Import ſhould denote the Head of the apoſtate Angels, it is not ſo eaſy a matter to determine, unleſs we will admit of this Conjecture, *viz.* that, as the People of *Ekron* had an Idol, which they ſtiled *Beelſamen*, *i. e.* the *God of Heaven*, by other Nations called *Jupiter Olympius*; the *Jews*, who uſed to give Nicknames, or Names of Contempt to all falſe Gods, called it ſometimes *Beelzebub*, or the *God-Fly*, becauſe theſe Heathens worſhipped it under the Figure of that Inſect, and ſometimes *Beelzebul*, or the *God of Ordure*, becauſe ſome ſort of Flies delight to feed on Ex-

crements. However this be, 'tis certain that the Apoſtles, in ſeveral Places of their Writings, do ſeem to inſinuate, that among the apoſtate Spirits, there was one ſuperior to the reſt, whom therefore they call *the Prince of Darkneſs*, Luke xxii. 53. *the Prince of this World*, John xii. 31. and the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, Eph. ii. 2. who, in the Days of *Tobit*, went under the Name of *Aſmodeus*, Chap. iii. 8. and is now by the *Jews* generally called *Sammael*, and by the *Chriſtians*, *Lucifer*.

That it was cuſtomary among the *Jews* to caſt out Devils, by the Invocation of the Name of the Moſt High, we may learn from *Juſtin Martyr*; who, in his Dialogue with *Trypho*, tells him, that *if any* Jew *exorciſed a Devil, in the Name of the God of* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *perhaps, he would obey him*; as alſo from what *Irenæus* tells us, *viz.* that *by the Invocation of the Name of God, even before the Advent of our Lord, Men were ſaved from evil Spirits and all kind of Demons*; and from what *Origen* (*cont. Celſ.*) affirms, *viz.* that *the Name of the God of* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *being uſed by the* Jews, *in the Incantation of Devils, did great Miracles*: And, if this was a common Practice among the *Jews*, then will the Force of our Saviour's Argument be this,——"You make "no doubt, but that your Exorciſts, who uſe the "Name of God, do eject Devils by Virtue of that "Name; and how partial is it then in you, to "paſs an unjuſt Cenſure upon me, in whom you "ſee far greater Evidences of the Finger of God, "in my caſting out all manner of evil Spirits, and "healing all kinds of Diſeaſes."

But how can our Saviour be ſaid to have continued as long in the Grave, as *Jonah* did in the Whale's

Whale's Belly, when there were no more than two Nights and one whole Day, between his Death and his Reſurrection? Now, for a Reſolution of this, we muſt obſerve, *firſt*, That the *Hebrews* began their Computation of a natural Day from the Evening, or Night preceding; ſo that, from one Sun-ſet to another Sun-ſet, they reckoned a compleat Day, even as *Moſes* does, when he ſays, *The Evening and the Morning were the firſt Day*, *Gen.* i. 5. *2dly*, That it is a common Thing with them, as well as other Nations, to put Part of a Day for the Whole, ſo that whatever is done in any Part of the Day, is properly enough ſaid to be done on that Day: And *3dly*, That they uſually reckon that to be done in ſo many Days, or ſo many Days and Nights, which begins in any Part of the firſt, and ends in any Part of the laſt Day. Now allowing this manner of Computation, and reckoning that the firſt Day began on *Thurſday* at Sun-ſet, and ended upon *Friday* at Sun-ſet; ſince our Saviour died on *Friday*, about three in the Afternoon, by putting a Part for the Whole, here we have one Day. *Saturday* is allowed on all Hands to be another; and, ſince the third Day began on *Saturday* at Sun-ſet, and our Saviour roſe on the Morning following, that Part of the Day being likewiſe put for the Whole, is fairly computed for the third. The *Hebrew* Child, according to Law, was to be circumciſed the eighth Day, but then the Day of its Birth, and of its Circumciſion were both counted; and, in like manner, if we reckon the Day on which *Chriſt* died, for one, and that on which he roſe, for another, including withal the Night belonging to the former, we may properly enough ſay that,

in imitation of the Prophet *Jonah*, *he was three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth.*

The City *Nineveh* is generally ſuppoſed to have been built by *Nimrod*, was ſituate upon the River *Tigris*, and famous once for being the Metropolis of the firſt, *i. e.* the *Aſſyrian* Empire.

Sheba, or *Saba*, is a Province of *Arabia Fœlix*, lying on the South of *Judea*, and on the extream Part of the Continent, and, being bounded by the Ocean is therefore ſaid to be the utmoſt Part of the Earth.

Our Saviour's Expreſſion, *ſhall riſe up in Judgment*, is ſpoken in Alluſion to a Cuſtom among the *Jews* and *Romans*, which was, for the Witneſſes to riſe from their Seats, when they accuſed Criminals, or gave any Evidence againſt them.

Since God had promiſed *Solomon*, that, as there was *none like him before him*, ſo after him *none ſhould ariſe like him* for Wiſdom, 1 *Kings* iii. 12. our Saviour's declaring, that in this Reſpect he was *greater than* Solomon, muſt be plainly avowing himſelf to be more than Man.

The Words in the Text are, *His Mother and his Brethren*, Matth. xii. 46. but as the Word *Brethren* (according to the Language of the *Jews*, *Gen.* xxix. 12. *Levit.* x. 4.) is of great Latitude, theſe Brethren are ſuppoſed to be either *Joſeph*'s Sons by a former Wife, and ſo our Saviour's Brother's-in-Law, or the Children of *Mary*, the Wife of *Cleophas*, and ſo his Couſin-germans. There is indeed a Tradition in the Church, that before his eſpouſing the Virgin *Mary*, *Joſeph* had another Wife, whoſe Name was *Iſcha*, by whom he had ſix Children, four Sons, *James*, *Joſeph*, *Simon*, and *Jude*, and two Daughters, whoſe Names, ſome ſay, were *Eſther* and *Thamar*, others, *Mary* and

Salome.

Salome. But whoever compares *Matt.* xiii. 55. and xxvii. 56. *Mark* xv. 40. and *John* xix. 25. together, will find, that the four Perſons, there ſaid to be our Saviour's Brethren, were the Sons of *Mary* the Wife of *Cleophas* or *Alpheus*, for the Name is all one, and Siſter to the Bleſſed Virgin; and ſo theſe Brethren of his (as we ſaid) were no more than his Couſin-germans. Others, however, ſtrenuouſly maintain the former Opinion, *viz.* that *Mary*, the Mother of *Jeſus*, was their Mother, *i. e.* their Step-Mother, and they conſequently his Brothers-in-law; and that, 1ſt, Becauſe this Opinion retains the proper Signification of the Word *Brethren*, in which the *Jews* always ſeem to uſe it, when they ſpeak of our Lord's Brethren and Siſters; and 2dly, Becauſe it agrees with the Senſe of Antiquity, which, ever before St. *Jerom*'s Time (ſays the learned *Pearſon*) looked upon them as the Brethren of our Lord, who lived with his Mother, and are therefore ſo frequently found together, *Matt.* xii. 46. *John* ii. 12.

Who are my Mother and Brethren, &c. We have another Speech of our Saviour's, much of the ſame Import with this. For when a certain Woman in the Company, upon hearing his excellent Doctrine, broke out into this Exclamation, *Bleſſed is the Woman that bare thee, and the Paps which thou haſt ſucked*, his Reply is, *Yea, rather bleſſed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it*, Luke xi. 27, 28. For *whoſoever ſhall do the Will of my Father, who is in Heaven, the ſame is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother*, Matt. xii. 50. which Texts do not derogate any Thing from the Honour truely due to the bleſſed Virgin, as the Mother of the *Meſſiah*, but only ſhew the Folly of ſome, who exalt her above *Chriſt*, whom *Chriſt* con-

conſidered only as his Mother, and ſeems here to ſet beneath every true Believer; tho', conſidered as a Believer likewiſe, ſhe has a juſt Title to Pre-eminence; and it is, *by that, ſhe is infinitely more happy than if ſhe had only been his Mother, according to the Fleſh.*

What this Houſe-keeper, mentioned *Matt.* xiii. 52. was in his own Family, that ſhould every Miniſter of the Goſpel be in the Church of *Chriſt*. He ſhould be thoroughly inſtructed in the Word of God, and capable of amaſſing a plentiful Proviſion of all Knowledge ſacred and profane. Above all, he ſhould be a perfect Maſter of the Law and the Prophets, acquainted with all Senſes, and capable to penetrate into their Myſteries; to know, more eſpecially, wherein the Goſpel, which *Chriſt* came to preach, differs from the Law given by *Moſes*, and to ſhew the Accompliſhment of the one, in the Publication of the other. For this was required, even in the *Levitical* Diſpenſation, that the *Prieſts Lips ſhould preſerve Knowledge*, that the People, *who ſought the Law at their Mouths*, might not be diſappointed, *Mal.* ii. 7.

Let us now go on with our Narrative.

He had not continued long in the City *Capernaum*, before he reſolved to croſs the Lake, or Sea of *Galilee*, and to that Purpoſe had ordered his Diſciples to prepare a Veſſel for him, wherever he went: But juſt as he was going on Board, a certain *Scribe* came and offered to attend him wherever he went; but when he underſtood that no temporal Emolument was to be obtained by ſuch Attendance, he very probably retracted. A Diſciple of his own, at the ſame Time, deſired leave to bury his Father, before he went along with him, but he commanded him to follow and

to leave ſuch Offices to the Children of this World; and, when another was for taking leave of his Family, and diſpoſing of his Effects, before he went, our Saviour let him know, *That whoever laid his Hand on the Plough, and looked back, was not fit for the Kingdom of God.*

To put the Hand to the Plough, is a proverbal Saying, not only among the *Greeks* and *Hebrews*, but many other Nations, and denotes in general the Beginning of any Enterprize. This our Saviour applies to ſpiritual Husbandry; and thereby gives us to underſtand, that as he who undertakes to plow, ſhould not look behind him, for fear of making his Furrow crooked or unequal; ſo he that engages in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel; ſhould not ſuffer himſelf to be encumbered with much ſerving about other Matters, but in the Language of the *Apoſtle*, *forgetting thoſe Things that are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe Things which are before, preſs toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of* Jeſus Chriſt, *Phil.* iii. 13, 14.

While the Ship was under Sail, and Jeſus aſleep in the Stern, there aroſe a moſt terrible Storm, ſo violent and impetuous, that the whole Ship was almoſt ſwallowed up by the Waves. Hereupon his Diſciples, in great Conſternation, awoke him; and when he aroſe, at his rebuking the Waves, they obeyed his Command, and immediately compoſed themſelves into a profound Calm, to the no ſmall Aſtoniſhment of every one that ſaw it.

The Next Morning, as our Lord landed on the *Eaſt* Side of the Lake, in that Part of the Province of *Trachonitis*, which is called the Country of the *Gadarens*, two Demoniacs, moſt grievouſly diſtracted,

diſtracted, with ſome poor Rags about them, came running towards him. Hideous Spectacles were they both; but one much fiercer than the other, made diſmal Out-cries, both Day and Night, and cut his Fleſh with ſharp Stones; and tho' he had been often bound with Fetters and Chains, yet he as often broke them to Pieces (ranging, with his Companion) among the Rocks and Tombs, and ſo very furious and outrageous, that no Traveller durſt paſs that Way. Upon their Approach to *Jeſus*, the Devils (who ſpake by their Mouths) declared him to be the Son of God, and expreſſed their Fear of his being come to *torment them before their Time*. They acknowledged their Number to be vaſtly great; and (if he caſt them out of the poſſeſſed Perſon) implored of him to ſuffer them to enter into the Herd of Swine, that was feeding on the Mountains not far off. Accordingly he permitted them; whereupon the whole Herd, to the Number of two Thouſand, ran violently upon the Rocks, and caſting themſelves headlong into the Lake, were all drowned, and utterly loſt.

The Keepers of the Swine fled in the utmoſt Fright, and reported this ſtrange Accident in the City *Gadara*, and the neighbouring Villages, which brought great Multitudes to the Place, where they found the Man (who had been the moſt furious of the two) ſitting at our Saviour's Feet, cloathed, and in his perfect Senſes. But, whether it was that they took amiſs the Deſtruction of the Swine, or thought themſelves unworthy of his divine Preſence, ſo it was, that they intreated our Lord to depart out of their Country, which accordingly he did; but, inſtead of permiting the Man

Man (out of whom he had caſt the moſt Devils) to go along with him, as he deſired, he ordered him *to return to his Houſe and his Friends, and there to declare what wonderful Things the Lord had done for him.*

As ſoon as our Lord had repaſſed the Lake, and was returned to *Capernaum*, the People came flocking about him, as uſual; and while he was teaching them, one *Jairus*, a chief Ruler of the *Synagogue*, falling proſtrate at his Feet, humbly beſought him to come and cure his Daughter, who was at the Point of Death; not doubting, but that if he laid his Hands upon her, ſhe would inſtantly recover. The Forwardneſs of the Ruler's Faith claimed our Saviour's Compaſſion and Aſſiſtance; and therefore he immediately roſe and followed him: But as he was on the Way, and preſſed with great Throngs of People, a certain Woman, who had been diſeaſed with an unnatural Flux of Blood for twelve Years, and, in Hopes of a Cure, had in vain ſpent all her Eſtate upon Phyſicians, being now confident, that if ſhe could but come to touch the Hem of his Garment, ſhe ſhould be healed, preſſed forward; and having got a Touch of it privately (as ſhe thought) found herſelf perfectly ſound. But ſhe was not unknown to *Jeſus*, and therefore, when he perceived that *Virtue was gone out of him*, turned about in the Throng, and demanded who it was that had touched him? The poor Woman came trembling; and, falling down at his Feet, declared to all the Company, both the Cauſe and miraculous Effects of her touching him, which he was ſo far from blaming, that he commended her Faith, and imputed her Cure to the wonderful Strength of it.

During this Tranſaction, the Delay proved fa-

tal (as one might imagine) to *Jairus*; for a Meſſage was brought him that his Daughter was actually dead, and therefore there was no Occaſion to give *Jeſus* any farther Trouble; but our Saviour, who over-heard what the Meſſenger ſaid, bid the Father not fear, but only believe, and then he ſhould find the bleſſed Effects of his Faith in the Recovery of his Daughter; and with theſe Words approaching the Houſe, they found the Muſicians and Mourners already come, who were deploring her Death with melancholy Tones, and loud Lamentations, according to the Cuſtom of thoſe Times. When *Jeſus* entered the Houſe, he deſired them to ceaſe their funeral Ceremonies, becauſe, at that Time, there was no Occaſion for them; and ſo taking the Girl's Parents, with *Peter* and *James*, and *John*, into the Chamber with him, he approached the Bed where ſhe lay, and taking her by the Hand, commanded her to ariſe; at which powerful Word her Life was reſtored to her again, ſo that ſhe immediately roſe up, and walked round the Room, to the no ſmall Amazement of her Parents. At his Departure he ordered them to give her ſomething to eat, and left a ſtrict Charge with them, that they ſhould make the Miracle ſecret; but their Joy was too great to conceal, what in Gratitude, for ſo great a a Mercy, they thought they were obliged to divulge.

What might poſſibly be the Motive of the Scribe's offering to attend our Saviour, the Conjectures of Commentators have been different. Some think that he did it with a ſincere Deſire to become his Diſciple; others, with a Deſign to turn Spy upon him; ſome out of a Spirit of Vanity to diſtinguiſh himſelf by being a Retainer to a Maſter

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in ſo great Reputation among the People; and others, out of a Principle of Self-intereſt, that he might attain ſome Poſt of Honour and Advantage, upon our Lord's Advancement to his Kingdom. This, indeed, ſeems to be the moſt probable Ground of his Reſolution, and accordingly the Deſign of our Saviour's Anſwer is, to diſcourage him from being his Diſciple upon ſuch ſecular Views, *the Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his own Head,* Luke xi. 58. And therefore much leſs any Accommodation or Proſpect of Preferment for his Followers.

Some are of Opinion, that the Diſciple who requeſted to bury his Father, was St. *Philip*, who was the firſt that adjoined himſelf to *Jeſus*, and that his Father was not actually dead, but only grown ſo very old, that he could not live long; and therefore the Purport of his Addreſs to *Chriſt* is, "That for the ſmall Remainder of his Father's Life, he might be permitted to live with "him, but that, after he had paid his laſt Offices to him, he would not fail to return again, "and devote himſelf intirely to his Service:" But others underſtand the Words in a litteral Senſe.

The Words in the Text, *Let the Dead bury the Dead,* Matt. viii. 22. is a Form of Speech common in all Sorts of *Authors*, when, in the ſame Place they uſe the ſame Word twice, tho' very frequently in different Senſes. Thus the *Pſalmiſt*, ſpeaking of God, ſays, *With the froward thou ſhalt ſhew thyſelf froward,* Pſal. xviii. 28. even as *Moſes* introduces God ſpeaking of himſelf, *If ye walk contrary to me, I will alſo walk contrary*

to you, Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. where the Words *froward* and *contrary*, as they relate to God, denote the Puniſhments which he intended to bring upon the Obſtinate, and are the rather uſed, becauſe the ſame Words went before. And, in like Manner, *Let the Dead bury the Dead, but follow thou me*, may ſignify, let others bury the Dead, thou haſt Work of more Conſequence to do. It muſt not be diſſembled however, that by the Dead, both ſacred and profane Authors do frequently mean, not only thoſe, who in a natural Senſe are dead, but thoſe likewiſe, who in a ſpiritual Senſe are ſo, by being alienated from the Life of God, and dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins. Thus *Clemens* of *Alexandria* tell us, that *the Philoſophers of the Barbarians called thoſe* dead, *who deſerted their Doctrines, and ſubjected their Minds to ſenſual Pleaſures*, which *Philo* calls *the Death of the Soul, entombed in Paſſions and all Manner of Wickedneſs*. And therefore the full Import of our Saviour's Words muſt be, *Let thoſe, who are unconcerned for the Things of God, and unfit to engage in promoting them perform ſuch Offices, which they can do, as well as others; but thou, who haſt begun to follow me, and to attend upon the Kingdom of God, go on with Reſolution, and without allowing thyſelf any Avocation from that Work*: Hereby teaching us, that they, who are called to the Preaching of the Goſpel, and the Salvation of Souls, ſhould not ſuffer any earthly Buſineſs, which may be done as well by others, who are unfit to be employed in Spirituals, to give them the leaſt Impediment or Moleſtation.

The Country *Trachonitis*, which is ſo called by the *Greeks* from its rough and craggy Mountains, together

together with *Ituræa*, made, in our Saviour's Time, one Tetrarchy, *i. e.* one fourth Part, or rather Diviſion (for they were not equal Parts) of the Kingdom of *Herod the Great*, when he died. It was antiently called *Argob*, *Deut.* iii. 13. and according to the beſt Account, is bounded on the *Eaſt* by *Arabia Deſerta*, to the *Weſt* by *Batanæa*, to the *South* by *Ituræa*, and to the *North* by the Country of *Damaſcus*. And as it was a Province full of rocky Hills, which ſerved for an Harbour to a great Number of Thieves and Robbers, it often found Employment for *Herod the Great*, as we may ſee in the Hiſtory of *Joſephus*.

The Country of the *Gadarens*, in St. *Matthew*, is called the Country of the *Gargaſens*, becauſe it lay in the Neighbourhood of the two Cities *Gadara* and *Gargeſa*, which were both ſituate within the Diſtrict of *Decapolis*. *Gadara*, which took its Name from the Tribe of *Gad*, to whom it fell by Lot in the Diviſion of the Land, was a famous City beyond *Jordan*, the Capital of *Peræa*, and ſtood Eaſtward of the Sea of *Tiberias*, about ſixty Furlongs from the Shore. *Gargeſa* was a Place of ſome Importance likewiſe, according to Hiſtorians; and the near Adjacency of theſe two Towns made the *Evangeliſts* call the Country that lay between them, ſometimes by one Name, and ſometimes by another.

There is ſome Difference between the *Evangeliſts* in their Account of the Cure of the Demoniacks: For, whereas St. *Mark*, Chap. v. 2. and St. *Luke*, Ch. viii. 27. take Notice only of one Demoniack; St. *Matthew*, Chap. viii. 28. makes mention of two. Now, to reconcile this ſeeming Difference, Dr. *Lightfoot* ingeniouſly conjectures, that

that one of theſe two was a *Gargeſen* and a *Jew*, and ſo, in caſting the Devil out of him, our Lord did no more than what he had frequently done in *Judea*, but the other a *Gadaren*, *i. e.* one of an heathen City, as *Joſephus* teſtifies, for which Reaſon St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* take chiefly Notice of him, as a more remarkable Inſtance, becauſe he, and the *Syrophœnician* Woman were the only two Heathens, that we read of, our Saviour cured. But there is a farther Reaſon for the *Evangeliſt*'s taking Notice of one rather than the other; and that is, That the one, in his Behaviour, was more remarkable than the other; was poſſeſſed with an unclean Spirit, called himſelf *Legion*, and could not be bound with Fetters or Chains; went about naked, and cutting himſelf with Stones; and when he was cured, diſtinguiſhed himſelf by deſiring to follow *Chriſt*: Circumſtances all, which St. *Matthew* omits, but St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* have particularly related, and upon theſe Accounts, might very likely think, that he fell more properly under their Conſideration, than the other.

The Tombs which the *Evangeliſts* here mention, are ſaid to be in the Mountains, and in the Wilderneſs: For the Cuſtom of the *Jews* was to have their Tombs, like ſo many little Cells cut out in the Sides of Caverns, and hollow Parts of Rocks and Mountains, at ſome Diſtance from their Towns, and uſually in very lonely and deſart Places; into which it was uſual for the Devils to compel thoſe whom they poſſeſſed, in order to confirm Men in the vain Perſuaſion that the Souls of thoſe that died in any Crime, were after Death turned into Devils.

St. *Jerom*, upon the Devil's Queſtion to our Saviour, is apt to imagine, that as Slaves, who have

have a long while run from their Maſter, no ſooner ſee his Face, but they bethink themſelves of the Puniſhment which they have deſerved; ſo the Devils, finding our Saviour upon Earth, thought, at firſt ſight, that he was come to judge and condemn them, and therefore they ask, *Art thou come hither to torment us before our Time?* i. e. before the Time of the laſt Judgment, when they expect no other than to be eternally puniſhed, or (as the Scripture expreſſes it) *to be caſt into the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone for ever.*

One Reaſon, as ſome imagine, why this Man deſired to be with *Chriſt*, was his Fear leſt the Devil, at his Departure, ſhould ſeize upon him again; and it was partly to avoid the Suſpicion of vain Glory, whereof our Lord might have given ſome Umbrage, had he carried about with him, all thoſe upon whom his greateſt Miracles were wrought, and partly to ſhew, that in his Abſence he was able to protect ſuch as believe and truſt in him, from the Malice of evil Spirits, that he would not accept of his Company.

Some learned Men are of Opinion, that *Jairus*, the Ruler of the *Synagogue*, was the Preſident of the Conſiſtory of the Twenty-three Judges which were appointed in every City, to puniſh ſuch Offences as were not capital; but it is more generally thought, that he was not a civil Magiſtrate, but a leading Man in the *Synagogue* of *Capernaum*, who had, in a great Meaſure, under his Direction ſuch Things as related to the Service of God. We are to obſerve, however, that the Word *Arxiſynagogos* is ſometimes taken in a ſtrict Senſe for the Perſon who was the Preſident, the Head and Maſter of the *Synagogue*, who, according to this Acceptation, was but one; and at other Times,

Times, in a larger Senſe, ſo as to comprehend the Presbyters and Elders likewiſe, in which Acceptation, the Rulers of the *Synagogue* were more than one. How many they were, is no where declare, becauſe that depended upon the Largeneſs of the City, and Number of thoſe who frequented the Place of divine Worſhip; only we may obſerve, that *Jairus* was not the chief Preſident, becauſe he is called *one* of the *Rulers of the Synagogue*, Mark v. 22.

Euſebius tells us for a Certainty, that the Woman with a Bloody-flux was a *Gentile*, living in *Paneas*, or *Cæſarea Philippi*, a Town ſituate near the Head of the River *Jordan*, and upon the Report of others, relates this Story. *That by the Gate of this Woman's Houſe, was erected a Braſs Statue, bearing the Effigies of a Woman upon her Knees, in the Poſture of a Supplicant; that oppoſite to her, their ſtood the Effigies of a Man in Braſs, reſembling our Saviour, ſtretching out his Hand to the Woman; that at the Feet of this Statue, an unknown Plant ſprung up, which reaching to the Borders of his Garment, became a preſent Remedy againſt all Manner of Diſeaſes; and that theſe Statues were ſtanding even unto the Time of the Emperor* Maxaminus, *who took them away from this City.* But (not to inſiſt on the many Exceptions that might be made to this Story, which ſavours much of the Superſtition of later Times,) how a Woman, who, as all the *Evangeliſts* informs us, had ſpent all that ſhe had, ſhould be able to erect two ſuch coſtly Statues, or how the *Jews*, in all their Wars, or the *Gentiles*, who were both bitter Enemies to *Chriſtianity*, ſhould ſuffer ſuch a Confirmation of it to remain ſo long, we can by no means imagine.

Hence it is evident, that the Virtue whereby our Saviour did theſe miraculous Cures, was not communicated to him, but reſided in him, and conſequently proves that he was God. For the Virtue whereby the Prophets and Apoſtles did their Cures, is aſcribed to God; as when it is ſaid, that *God did ſpecial Miracles by the Hand of* Paul, *Acts* xix. 11. But the Miracles done by *Chriſt*, are imputed to the *Virtue, which went out of him, and healed all that ſought to touch him*, Luke vi. 19. *The Virtue's going out of him*, however, is a Vulgar Expreſſion, which muſt not be taken in its literal Senſe, as if it were a Quality diſtinct from the Perſon of *Chriſt*, and what might paſs from him to another; becauſe the divine Power reſiding in him, was incapable of any Alienation or Diminution, be the Cures he performed never ſo many, or never ſo miraculous; and therefore the only Meaning of the Expreſſion muſt be, that it went out, with Regard to us, or according to our Conception and Apprehenſion of Things, when it diſcovered and manifeſted itſelf in the Cure of ſome Diſeaſe, or any outward Effects.

Our Saviour's Diſciples, we find, admired at his asking this Queſtion, *Luke* v. 31. but the Reaſon for his doing ſo, we may ſuppoſe, was to diſcover to the People the Greatneſs of the Miracle, which, without this Examination, might have gone off without being known; to ſhew them the Strength and Virtue of the Woman's Faith and Confidence in his Power; and thence to convince *Jairus*, who began a little to ſtagger in his Faith, that he was able to revive his Daughter, even tho' ſhe was dead, if he did but believe.

In all the Books of the *Old Teſtament*, there is not the leaſt Hint given us of any muſical Inſtru-

ments, employed in Funerals. We read, indeed, a good deal of mourning for the Dead, of Mourners hired on purpoſe, and of the diſmal Ditties, which theſe People ſung, to excite Sorrow in others: But the Uſe of Muſick was reckoned an incongruous Thing, and no ways comporting with the Solemnity of this ſad Seaſon. Among Heathen Authors there is frequent mention made of it, as a Thing long in Uſe, both with the *Greeks* and *Romans*; and therefore we may preſume, that from theſe Nations it was, that the *Jews* borrowed and adopted it into their Funeral Ceremonies. That among them it was in Uſe in our Saviour's Time, at leaſt among Perſons of the better Rank, is plain from the Paſſage now before us; that it was an eſtabliſhed Cuſtom in the Time of *Joſephus*, is evident from his own Teſtimony; and and that it grew into a kind of ſuperſtitious Uſe, in the Times following, is evident from what the *Rabbins* enjoin, *viz.* that none, even of the meaner Sort, ſhould, at the Funeral of a Wife, have fewer than two Flutes, beſides the Voices of old Women, who, by their ſad Modulation, were to extort Lamentation from others.

The Reaſon which our Saviour gives for his deſiring them to ceaſe their funeral Ceremonies, is, that *the Maid is not dead, but aſleep*, Luke viii. 52. Now, in ſeveral Places of the *New Teſtament* eſpecially, Death is called a Sleep, *John* xi. 11. *Acts* vii. 60. 1 Cor. xv. 6, *&c.* and therefore our Saviour only makes uſe of this Word of a ſofter Signification, not ſo much with a Deſign to impoſe upon thoſe to whom he directed his Speech, as to teſtify his Humility and great *Modeſty*, in his Deſire to conceal his divine Power. The Perſons he ſpoke to, were certainly thoſe who were preparing

preparing for her Interment, and performing the Funeral Rites belonging to it; and therefore he only intimates, that ſhe was not ſo dead, as they accounted her, *i. e.* not to come to life again before the Reſurrection; but that her Death was no more than what he could remove, with the ſame Facility, as another might be awakened out of Sleep.

Let us now explain ſome Things in this Period of the Hiſtory. Returning from the Houſe of *Jarus*, our Lord was followed in the Streets by two blind Men, imploring his Aid, who, as ſoon as he had entered the Houſe, came after him, and when he had cured them, were diſmiſſed with a ſtrict Charge to conceal the Miracle, which out of the Abundance of their Joy they could not do. And, no ſooner were the blind Men gone, but the People brought to him a dumb Man, poſſeſſed with a Devil, which when he had caſt out, the Perſon immediately recovered his Speech, to the great Aſtoniſhment of the Multitude, who unanimouſly acknowledged, that the like had *never been ſeen in* Iſrael; only the *Phariſees* perſiſted in their old Malice, and inſinuated to the People (as formerly) *that he ejected Devils, by the Help of ſome ſupreme Devil*, who had the reſt under his Controul, and with whom he was confederate.

After a ſhort Stay at *Capernaum*, our Lord departed, with his Diſciples, into ſome other Parts of *Galilee*. About a Year before he had been barbarouſly treated by the Inhabitants of *Nazareth*, the Place of his Education; and yet, notwithſtanding this, he was reſolved once more to make them a freſh Tender of Mercy. To this Purpoſe he went into their *Synagogue* on the Sab-

bath-day, and taught the People; but inſtead of being converted to the Faith, tho' they were aſtoniſhed at his Abilities, they were ſcandalizing his Perſon, and began to upbraid him with the Meanneſs of his Parentage and Employment, as they had done before; inſomuch that being ſenſible, that a *Prophet never wanted Honour, but in his own Country*, he did not abide with them long, nor did he work any Miracles there (except the Cure of a few ſick Perſons) by Reaſon of their Infidelity.

Upon his Departure from *Nazareth*, he viſited moſt of the Cities and Villages of *Galilee*, teaching in the *Synagogues*, preaching the Goſpel, and curing all Kinds of Diſeaſes among the People; and as he obſerved, one Day, the numerous Throngs and Multitudes that reſorted to him, he looked upon them with an Eye of Pity and Compaſſion, as ſo many Sheep diſperſed and deſtitute of Shepherds, and from thence formed a Reſolution to ſend out his twelve *Apoſtles* (by two and two together) into the more diſtant Parts of *Judea*, whilſt himſelf continued preaching in *Galilee*, and the Places adjacent.

To this Purpoſe, he inveſted them with a full Power to cure all Diſeaſes, eject Devils, and even raiſe the Dead. He gave them Inſtructions in what Manner they were to behave in the Places whither they went; but forbad them, at the ſame Time, to addreſs themſelves to any of the *Gentiles* or *Samaritans*, but only *to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael, *Matt.* x. 16. He told them the Conſequence of their Miniſtry, which (after his Death more eſpecially) inſtead of intitling them to temporal Advantages, would expoſe them

to

to ſundry Kinds of Perſecutions; but, for their Encouragement, he acquainted them, that thoſe who rejected their Meſſage, ſhould be treated with Severity, at leaſt at the righteous Judgment of God: whereas thoſe that received them kindly, and gave, were it but a *Cup of cold Water*, to the leaſt of his Diſciples, for their Maſter's Sake, *ſhould in no wiſe miſs of his Reward.*

With this Commiſſion the Apoſtles went into all Parts of *Paleſtine*, where the *Jews* inhabited, preaching the Goſpel and the Doctrine of Repentance, as Part of it, working Miracles for its Confirmation, and anointing the Sick for a Token of their Recovery, whilſt our Lord continued the Courſe of his Miniſtry in *Galilee*. It was now about a Year ſince *Herod Antipas* had committed *John the Baptiſt* cloſe Priſoner to the Caſtle *Macharus*, and upon the Return of his Birth-day, having made a ſplendid Entertainment for the Lords and chief Officers of his Dominions, he was infinitely pleaſed with the Dancing of a young Lady, Daughter to his unlawful Wife, *Herodias*; inſomuch, that in the Height of his Mirth and Jollity, he promiſed (with the Addition of an Oath) to grant her whatever ſhe demanded, tho' it amounted to Half of his Dominions. Unwilling to loſe ſo fair an Opportunity, ſhe immediately conſulted with her Mother what Favour to ask, who being prompted by the Heighth of her Malice and Revenge, named the Head of *John the Baptiſt* to be given her, which the Daughter accordingly demanded of the King, in the Preſence of the whole Aſſembly.

This ſtrange Requeſt, at firſt cauſed an exceeding Damp upon the King's Spirits; but having recovered

recovered himſelf (out of a pretended Reverence to his Oath, and Reſpect to his Nobility, then preſent) he ſent a Executioner, who beheaded *John*, and brought his Head in a Charger to the young Lady, which ſhe preſented to the Mother; but, as for his Body, his Diſciples, when they came to hear of his Death, took care to bury it, and to bring to *Jeſus* the News of the tragical Fate that had befallen their Maſter.

The following Notes will explain what may ſeem difficult in the foregoing Narration.

The *Greek* Word we tranſlate Carpenter, is of general Signification, and denotes any Worker, either in Wood, Metal, or Stone; but the Tradition of the Church has all along been, that our bleſſed Saviour was what our Tranſlation has ſpecified, a Carpenter; and *Juſtin Martyr* aſſures us, that he made Plows and Yokes, which at that Time were the Carpenter's Buſineſs. However this be, it is certain, that by the *Jewiſh* Canons, all Parents were bound to teach their Children ſome Trade; that their moſt celebrated *Rabbins* thought it a great Reproach not to be of ſome Profeſſion; and that there was a peculiar Reaſon why our Saviour ſhould be of one, and that no very liberal one neither, even to take off all Suſpicion of his being bred up in curious Arts, which his Enemies at all Times were forward enough to ſay, notwithſtanding the Diſadvantages of his Education.

Among all the Accounts which the Heathens have given us of their famous Magicians and Workers of Wonders, there are none to be found, who pretended to a Power to delegate their Virtue to others, or to impart their Power to them, up-

on the Invocation of their Names, or Belief of their Doctrine. Hence *Arnobius* having ſummed up the Miracles which our Saviour did, adds, That he *not only did them by his Power, but permitted many others to do them by Invocation of his Name; nor did he any peculiar and aſtoniſhing Miracles himſelf, that he did not enable his* little one's, *and even Ruſticks to perform:* Whereupon he asks thoſe he writes to, *Did ever that* Jupiter, *whom the* Romans *worſhip in their Capital, give the like Power to any Mortal!* And then concludes this to be a Demonſtration of a truly divine Power: *For to transfer your miraculous Power to a Man, and to give Authority and Strength to a Creature to do that, which you alone can do, is an infallible Evidence of one that hath Power over all, and the Cauſes of all Things at his Beck.*

He calls all *Iſrael* Sheep, tho' they were not obedient to the Voice of their Shepherds, as not being all choſen People. He calls them loſt Sheep, becauſe they were in great Danger of being loſt and ruined by the Ignorance and Wickedneſs of their Guides; and to them the Apoſtles were ſent, becauſe they were the *Children of the Kingdom*, Matt. viii. 12. to whom the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* was made, *Gen.* xvii. 1. and *of whom concerning the Fleſh he came*, Rom. ix. 5. and therefore it was the divine Will that they ſhould be firſt honoured with the Preaching of the Goſpel, and alone enjoy the Miniſtry of *Jeſus Chriſt* and his Diſciples, while he continued upon Earth: But, upon their rejecting of ſo great Salvation, the Apoſtle's Commiſſion was enlarged. For *it was neceſſary* (ſays St. *Paul* to the *Jews*) that *the Word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you*, but *ſeeing you put it from you, and judge yourſelves unworthy*

worthy of everlaſting Life, lo we turn to the Gentiles, Acts xiii. 46.

That it was uſual with the *Jews* to preſcribe Oil as a proper Thing to anoint the Sick, in order to their Recovery, Dr. *Lightfoot,* upon *Mark* vi. 13. has fully proved; nor can we think that the Apoſtles having no Command from *Chriſt* to do ſo, would have uſed this Ceremony, had it not been cuſtomary among their Countrymen: But whether they did it ſymbolically, in hopes of obtaining to the Patient the Oil of Gladneſs, or only medicinally; it is certain that the Virtue which attended it, when uſed by the Apoſtles, could not be natural, and inherent in the Oil, but muſt be ſupernatural, and derived from him who ſent them, becauſe this Unction always produced a certain and conſtant Cure in thoſe that were anointed.

Both the City and Fort which were called by the Name of *Machærus,* were ſituated beyond *Jordan,* about two Leagues from that River, on the *North-eaſt* Side of the Lake *Aſphaltites,* or *Dead-Sea,* and not far diſtant from the Place where that River diſcharges itſelf into it. It was in the Hands of *Aretas,* King of *Arabia,* when he married his Daughter to *Herod Antipas,* but how it afterwards came into *Herod*'s Poſſeſſion (as it certainly was, when he beheaded *John the Baptiſt*) we have no Account from Hiſtory.

That it was an uſual Cuſtom with Kings to celebrate the Day of their Birth, and that of their Acceſſion to the Throne, for the Word may be applied to either) with great Solemnity, we have an Example as old as *Pharaoh, Gen.* xl. 20. nor need we doubt, but that, on ſuch joyful Occaſions, there were Muſick and Dancing, and all Manner

of

N. Langlois fecit

Satan retires from Christ, and Angels worship him. Matt: 4·10·11·12.

of Diverſions to entertain the Company: But that Perſons of the firſt Rank and Diſtinction ſhould act any Part in theſe Diverſions, was a rare and unwonted Thing; and therefore St. *Chryſoſtom* is of Opinion, that *Herodias*, foreſeeing what would happen, forced this young Lady upon a Thing which would better become an Actreſs upon the Stage.

This *Herodias*, (as *Joſephus* relates the Matter) *in contempt of the Laws of her Country, married again to* Herod, *the natural Brother of her Husband, ſeparating herſelf from him, whilſt living, altho' he had a Child by her*; ſo that being guilty both of Inceſt and Adultery, ſhe might well be called his unlawful Wife.

It may not be improper here, to take Notice of the remarkable Providence of God, in avenging the Death of this righteous Man upon *Herod*, *Herodias*, and her Daughter. 1ſt, As the War between *Herod*, and *Aretas* King of *Arabia*, was occaſioned by *Herod*'s wicked Contract with *Herodias* to eject his Daughter, who was his lawful Wife, and to marry her who was his Brother *Philip*'s; ſo *Joſephus* declares, that the *Jews* looked upon his putting *John* to Death, as the Cauſe of the Miſcarriage of his Army, *God being angry with him for the Death of* John the Baptiſt. 2dly, Envying the Glory of her Brother *Agrippa*, upon whom *Caligula* had conferred the Title of a King. *Herodias* prevailed with her Husband to repair to *Rome*, in order to requeſt the like Favour of the Emperor; but the Emperor, having received a bad Impreſſion againſt him, inſtead of granting what he deſired, deprived him of his Government, and baniſhed both her and him to *Lyons* in *France*, where

they lived inglorioufly, and died miſerably; and this, according to *Joſephus*, *was done in Puniſhment of her Envy, and of his Readineſs to hearken to her Solicitations.* And 3dly, Of her Daughter it is related, that as ſhe was going over the Ice in Winter, the Ice brake and let her in up to the Head, which, upon the meeting of the Ice again, was ſevered from her Body. And this Story, if it be true, (as it is confidently told us by *Nicephorus*) is a wonderful Inſtance of God's avenging Providence.

Herod was no more than a *Tetrarch*, or one of thoſe Four among whom his Father's Kingdom was divided; but St. *Mark*, Chap. vi. 14. gives him the Title of a King, as himſelf no doubt was fond enough of it, and perhaps, in the Provinces under his Dominion, was generally called by it. Why he came to be concerned at the young Lady's deſiring ſo ſtrange a Boon as that of the *Baptiſt*'s Head, is no Wonder. The very mention of ſuch a Thing from ſuch a Perſon, and in ſuch an Aſſembly, was enough to ſhock any Man of leſs than uncommon Barbarity; but then the *Evangeliſt* informs us, that *Herod* had conceived a good Opinion of the *Baptiſt*, as a juſt and holy Man, and when he heard him (as he did it very gladly) in many Things he followed his Advice, *Mark* vi. 20. and not only ſo, but feared the Reſentment of the People likewiſe, (with whom he was in high Eſteem) when they ſhould come to be informed of the Cauſe and Circumſtance of his Death, *Matt.* xiv. 5. There might, however, be another Reaſon, leſs obſerved, for *Herod*'s Concern upon this Occaſion. It was now his Birthday; and it was uſual even among heathen Princes, at ſuch a Time, to be gay and merry, to think of no ill Omens, to ſurceaſe all Contentions, and not

ſo much as to deprive of Life, even condemned Criminals, on that Day, when the Sovereign of the Country received his, leſt they ſhould offend or ſadden the Genius that preſided over their Nativity: And therefore it is more than probable, that *Herod*, who was more than half a Pagan, might have the ſame Notion of the Thing. But, if he had not, it can hardly be thought, but that ſuch an Execution would dampt the Joy of the Meeting, and procure him more Enemies among the thinking Part of the Company, than the Non-performance of a wicked and illegal Oath could have done.

The *Greek* Word which we render *Executioner*, in the Hiſtory of the *Roman* Emperors, ſignifies a *Soldier of the Guard*; and among the *Jews*, *Romans*, *Chaldæans* and *Egyptians*, it was cuſtomary for one of the King's Guard to be the Executioner of thoſe whom he had condemned to death.

Thus died the great Fore-runner of our bleſſed Saviour, about two Years and three Months after his Entrance upon his publick Miniſtry, in the thirty-fifth Year of his Age, and was the firſt who ſuffered upon the Account of the Goſpel, tho' ſeldom called the firſt Martyr. *He was, indeed, a Man* (according to the Character which *Joſephus* gives of him) *endued with all Virtue, who exhorted the* Jews *to the Practice of Juſtice towards Men, and Piety towards God, and alſo to Baptiſm, which would become acceptable to God, if they renounced their Sins, and to the Clearneſs of their Bodies, added the Purity of Souls.*

When *Herodias* had got the Baptiſts Head in her Poſſeſſion, it is ſaid, that ſhe thruſt his Tongue through with her Bodkin; and for Fear that the

Head, if buried with the Body, ſhould be Reunited, and riſe again to diſturb her unlawful Luſt, and diſquiet *Herod*'s Conſcience, ſhe buried it in her own Palace; but where his Apoſtles buried his Body the *Evangeliſts* have not informed us, only we are told, that in the Time of *Julian* the Apoſtate, his Tomb was ſhewn at *Samaria*, where the Inhabitants of the Country opened it, and burnt Part of his Bones; but the reſt were ſaved by ſome Chriſtians, that carried them to one *Philip*, an Abbot of *Jeruſalem*, who preſented them to St. *Athanaſius*; but ſome Time after, when *Theodoſius* built a Church, in Honour of the *Baptiſt*, in the Place where the Temple of *Serapis* ſtood, *Ann. Dom.* 396, theſe holy Relicks were repoſited in it: Tho' what became of his Head we no where read, only the Abbot *Villeloin* tells us, in his Memoirs, that he ſaw one at *Amiens*; but this was the fifth or ſixth Head of the *Baptiſt*, that, in the Courſe of his Travels, he had the Honour to kiſs.

Let us now reſume our Story. About the ſame Time that *Jeſus* was informed of *John*'s Death by his Diſciples, his own Apoſtles returned from their ſeveral Journeys, and gave him an Account of all their Tranſactions. The Fame of the Miracles, which our Saviour, both by himſelf and his Apoſtles, had wrought, gave *Herod* ſome Umbrage, to think that the Perſon who did them, was *John*, whom he had unjuſtly murthered, and who now, very probably, was riſen from the Dead to revenge his Blood upon him; and therefore, knowing the Subtility and Cruelty of that Prince, our Saviour ordered his Apoſtles to prepare a Veſſel, wherein he

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and they only, might croſs the Sea of *Galilee*, and retire for a little while from the Multitude, to a Deſart near *Bethſaida*. But in vain was it for him to think of concealing himſelf: The People ſeeing where he took ſhipping, ran after him on Foot by the Lake-ſide; and, tho' they had a great Circuit of Land to take, were got into the *Deſart* almoſt aſſoon as he; which ſingular Inſtance of their Zeal ſo affected his Compaſſion, that, tho' he came to that Place for the ſake of Retirement, he could no longer with-hold his Preſence from them; but, aſcending a Mountain, and taking his Diſciples with him, he there firſt inſtructed them in ſeveral Things concerning the Kingdom of God, and having afterwards cured their Sick and Diſeaſed, he, at laſt, fed them all, to the Number of five thouſand Men, beſides Women and Children, with five Barley-loaves and two ſmall Fiſhes (having firſt invoked a Bleſſing upon them) and that with a Plenty ſo exuberant, that the very Fragments which remained filled twelve Baskets.

This miraculous Multiplication made ſuch an Impreſſion upon the Multitude, that they no longer doubted of his being the *Meſſiah*, and were therefore reſolved to ſet him up for their King by main Force; but he, knowing the Miſchief of ſuch a Deſign, conſtrained his Diſciples (who were forward enough perhaps to join in the Thing) immediately to take Shipping, and to paſs by *Bethſaida* to *Capernaum*, whilſt himſelf diſmiſſed the Multitude; and (when he had ſo done) continued till after Midnight in Meditation and Prayer.

In the mean time the Ship, where the Apoſtles were on Board, was toſſed with a great Storm in the middle of the Lake. The Waves ran ſo high,

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and the Wind was ſo contrary, that, aſſoon as Morning appeared, they had not got much above a League on their Voyage, when our Saviour came walking on the Surface of the Sea, and drew near towards the Ship. This ſtrange Appearance (which they took for a Spirit) increaſed their Fear not a little. Our Lord indeed, to diſpel it, told them who he was; but *Peter*, ſtill doubtful, wanted a Demonſtration, which when he permitted him to try, and the Apoſtle, upon the Experiment, was ready to ſink, he graciouſly reached out his Hand, and, with a gentle Rebuke for the Weakneſs of his Faith, ſetting him again upon the Top of the Waves, walked along with him to the Veſſel; which they had no ſooner entered, but the Winds, knowing their Duty to their Sovereign, ceaſed. The reſt of the Diſciples obſerving, came and adored *Jeſus*, acknowledging his Omnipotence, and admiring the Divinity of his Power and Perſon; and as it was not long before the Ship gained the Port, great Numbers out of the Country, aſſoon as they underſtood that he was arrived, brought their Sick and Diſeaſed on Beds, and laid them before him in the Streets, beſeeching him to permit them only to touch the Border *of his Garment, and as many as touched him were made whole.*

The Multitudes, whom our Lord had miraculouſly fed in the *Deſart* near *Bethſaida*, were in Expectation of finding him the next Morning on the Mountain; for they had ſeen the Diſciples take Shipping without their Maſter, and no other Veſſel left for him: But, perceiving that he was gone, as well as his Diſciples, and having an Opportunity of other Veſſels from *Tiberias*, they paſſed over with all Expedition to *Capernaum*, where they

they found him teaching in the Synagogues: And, being in no ſmall Surprize, deſired to know of him *how he got thither?* But inſtead of gratifying their Curioſity with a direct Anſwer, he, who knew their corrupt Expectations, and that they came after him, not ſo much for his miraculous Gifts, as the Gratification of their own Appetites, took Occaſion from thence to diſcourſe to them of a certain Food, different to what he had given them in the *Deſart* of *Bethſaida*, infinitely more deſerving of their Inquiſition, and whereof the *Manna* in the Wilderneſs was no more than a Figure or a Type. What this Fruit was he ſignified to them, *viz.* The Merits of his future Death and Paſſion, which alone could be available for the obtaining of eternal Life, to ſuch as believed in his divine Miſſion and Deſcent from Heaven.

But theſe ſublime Truths, which, for the preſent, he thought proper to couch in Terms obſcure, and figurative enough, ſo gravelled the Intellects of his Auditory, that even his Diſciples began to murmour, and many of his Followers, miſtaking the Words in a *literal*, which he intended in a *ſpiritual* Senſe, and thence inferring, that he was not ſuch a *Meſſiah* as they imagined, wholly deſerted him; inſomuch that he began to ſuſpect the Fidelity of his very *Apoſtles*, until *Peter* (in Behalf of all the reſt) declared their fixed Purpoſe of adhering to him, upon full Conviction, that he was the *Meſſiah*, the Son of the living God. But, notwithſtanding this liberal and frank Confeſſion, our Lord gave them to underſtand, that they were not all equally ſound, for *among the Twelve, whom he had ſelected, one of them was to prove a Traitor*; meaning this of *Judas Iſcariot*, who juſtly deſerved that Name, becauſe he afterwards betrayed him.

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We ſhall now illuſtrate what we have related, with the following Obſervations.

Several of the ancient *Jewiſh* Writers, as well as ſome modern Rabins, are of Opinion, that the Souls of Men and Women, when they died, went into other Bodies, inſomuch that they imagine, that the Soul of *Moſes* was the ſame with that of *Abel*; and that of the *Egyptian* whom *Moſes* ſlew, the ſame with that of *Cain*: But, whether the *Jews* had this Notion of the *Tranſmigration of Souls* (as *Joſephus*, de Bell. lib. vii. cap. 25. and *Philo*, de Somniis, ſeem to tell us) it can hardly be thought, that what *Herod* here ſays, in regard to our Saviour, was ſpoken in Alluſion to it, becauſe it is not conceivable, how the Soul of *John*, lately dead, could enter into the Body of *Chriſt*, which, for thirty Years and upwards, had been informed by another Soul. And therefore his Words muſt be underſtood, not of the *Tranſition* of the *Baptiſt*'s Soul, but of his *Reviviſence*, or returning to Life again. For, as it was an Opinion among the *Jews*, that, at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, ſome of their Prophets would riſe from the Dead; *Herod* had ſome Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that *John*, whom all the *Jews* held to be a Prophet, might be permitted to return into the World, and perhaps, to avenge his Death upon the Tyrant.

The *Evangeliſts* make uſe of two Words upon the Occaſion of *Chriſt*'s feeding the Multitude; *Bleſſing*, and *giving of Thanks*; and, by the former of thoſe ſome Interpreters underſtand the multiplying Virtue, when he then commanded down upon the Suſtenance, that he was going to give to the People, and its marvelous Increaſe in the Hand of the Diſtributors, whereby it became a Repaſt ſufficient for ſo large a Multitude: Tho' others think, that

that he did no more than what we call *ſaying Grace*, *i. e.* thanked God for his bountiful Proviſion of all Things, and begged his Bleſſing upon what he was going to diſpenſe among the People, that it might tend to the wholſome Nouriſhment of their Bodies. However this be, 'tis enough to warrant the indifferent Uſe of theſe two Words, that the Forms of Addreſs to Almighty God, upon the Uſe of his Gifts for our Refreſhment, have uſually been of a mixed Nature, and conſiſting partly of Praiſes and partly of Petitions, becauſe the End of ſuch Devotions is manifeſtly twofold, *viz.* to render our Acknowledgments to God for his Liberality, and then to beg of him, that the good Creatures which he hath given us, may be ſanctified to our Uſe.

In this Miracle, which could not be done without a creating Power, our Lord not only ſhewed himſelf to *be God, bleſſed for evermore*, but took from the unbelieving *Jews* all manner of Cavil, and Exception to his Works. For tho' Devils might, by Compact, give Place to one another, and ſome Exorciſts of their own might poſſibly caſt them out; yet none ever pretended to multiply Bread and Fiſh to ſuch a Proportion, that ſo ſmall a Quantity of either ſhould feed ſuch a Number, and then leave ſo great a Remainder.

It was a ſufficient Reaſon for our Saviour's ordering the Fragments to be gathered up, and put in Baskets, that, from them might appear both the Reality of the Miracle, and the exceeding Greatneſs of the Increaſe; but becauſe our Lord aſſigns another, by ſaying, *Gather up the Fragments, that nothing be loſt*, he hath herein ſhewed us, that all Reſerving for the future is not unlaw-

ful; that Charity is very conſiſtent with Frugality; indeed, not only that they may, but that they ſhould, go together; for God will be ſure to make a mighty Difference between the Virtue, and the ſpecious Extream beyond it; between the liberal and the laviſh Man.

St. *Mark* tells us, that our Saviour ordered his Apoſtles to croſs the Sea, and to wait for him on the other Side, at *Bethſaida*, Chap. vi. 45. St. *John* writes, that accordingly they entered into the Ship, but, inſtead of going where they were directed, they ſteered their Courſe towards *Capernaum*, Chap. vi. 17. and yet, after all, if we will believe St. *Matthew*, they landed at laſt, neither at *Bethſaida* nor *Capernaum*, but in the Country of *Genneſaret*, Chap. xiv. 34. Now to reconcile this, we need only remember what all the *Evangeliſts* tell us, *viz.* that while the Apoſtles were on board, there aroſe a ſtrong Gale of Wind, which, blowing from the *North*, proved, in a manner, quite contrary to them, ſo that, inſtead of making the Port of *Bethſaida*, which is on the *North* Coaſt of the Sea of *Galilee*, the next Morning they found themſelves on the oppoſite Side, not far from *Tiberias*, and to the *South* of *Capernaum*. Tho' therefore our Saviour ordered them to go to *Bethſaida*, yet they could not do it, becauſe the Wind was againſt them. Their next Attempt therefore was, to get to *Capernaum*, but even that they could not do; but, being forced to yield to the Storm, were carried a good way below to the *South* of it, from whence they juſt touched at *Nazareth*, and thence proceeded to *Capernaum*.

It was a common Opinion among the *Jews*, that Spirits did ſometimes appear cloathed in an human

human Form; but what put the Apoſtles at this Time in the greater Fright, was their imagining, that thoſe who appeared at Night, were uſually evil Spirits, and that this, which they now ſaw, might poſſibly be the *Demon* who had raiſed the Storm.

We may obſerve from ſeveral Parts of the *Goſpel*, particularly from *Luke* xiii. 23, 24. *John* xii. 34, 35. that it was uſual with our bleſſed Saviour to anſwer nothing to ſuch curious Queſtions, as had no Tendency to Edification, but to divert the People from them, by propoſing ſome more profitable Subject.

Our bleſſed Saviour, through the greateſt Part of St. *John*'s Goſpel, takes an Occaſion, from the Multitudes coming after him out of a greedy Deſire to be fed, to diſcourſe to them of ſpiritual Bleſſings under the Metaphors of Meat and Drink; and, for his Apology in ſo doing, we may obſerve, that, among the *Oriental* and *Jewiſh* Writers, no Metaphor was more common than this; that, to this Purpoſe, *Solomon*, in his Book of *Proverbs*, introduces Wiſdom crying in the Streets, *Come eat of my Bread, and drink of my Wine, which I have mingled*, Prov. ix. 5. for *they that eat me, ſhall yet be hungry, and they that drink me, ſhall yet be thirſty*, ſays the wiſe Son of *Sirach*; *for the Soul* (as *Plato* expreſſes it) *is nouriſhed by receiving and practiſing good Things, and Wiſdom, Temperance, and Piety, are the Food of a Soul, that can ſuck them in.* That, as our Saviour calls himſelf *the Bread which came down from Heaven*, Philo, upon the Words of *Moſes* deſcants, *What Food can God rain down from Heaven, but that heavenly Wiſdom which he ſends down upon the Soul, that deſires it?* That, as he exhorts the People to labour

for Meat, that *periſhes not*; *Philo* declares, that the Wiſdom of God is the *Nurſe*, and *Nouriſher of thoſe, that deſire incorruptible Diet*; and that, as he compares himſelf to the *Manna*, which fell in the Wilderneſs; *the good Man* (ſays *Philo* again) *lifts up his Eyes to Heaven, looking to the Manna, the divine and heavenly Word, the incorruptible Food of the Soul, that loves God:* And from hence we may perceive, why our Saviour inſiſts ſo much upon this Metaphor, even becauſe it was familiar to the *Jews*, and uſed by their moſt celebrated Writers. But to proceed.

Whether our Bleſſed Saviour was at *Jeruſalem*, on the *third Paſſover* after his Baptiſm, the *Evangeliſts* have not informed us; but 'tis very probable that he, who came to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, would not neglect ſo great an Ordinance. Upon this Preſumption, 'tis moſt generally believed that he was there, though very likely he might not ſtay long, but, aſſoon as the Feſtival was over, return into *Galilee*, becauſe the Rulers at *Jeruſalem* lay in wait for an Opportunity to put him to death.

Upon his Return into *Galilee*, a certain Number of Scribes and *Phariſees* were ſent from *Jeruſalem*, to be Spies upon his Actions, and to criticiſe upon his Doctrine. Theſe Men obſerving, that when he and his Diſciples were to eat, they ſat down without waſhing their Hands, contrary to the common Cuſtom of the *Jews*, which (as they pretended) was founded upon a Tradition, expoſtulated with him the Reaſon for ſo doing. To whom (inſtead of anſwering them directly) he put another Queſtion by way of Recrimination, *viz.* Why they, by their pretended Traditions, vacated the Laws of God, particularly, that ſo ſolemn one,

of

of *honouring their Parents*, and relieving them in their Wants? And, thereupon looking upon them as ſo many Hypocrites, with whom he diſdained to hold any farther Converſe, he turned to the Multitude, and informed them, that true Piety did not conſiſt in outward Ceremonies, but in a ſincere Obſervance of the Laws of God; that no Pollution could be in what entered into a Man's Mouth, but only in what proceeded from it; for (as he afterwards explains the Thing to his Diſciples) "whatever we eat does not affect the Mind, "the only Seat of Defilements, for it paſſes into "the Stomach, and is ſoon thrown out of the "Body, ſo that, be it never ſo groſs, or unclean, "it cannot pollute the Eater: But all Pollution is "from within, from the Corruption of the Heart, "ſuch as impure Thoughts, unchaſte Deſires, un-"holy Purpoſes, immodeſt and indecent Speeches, "*&c.* theſe are the Things that leave a laſting "Stain upon the Soul, which a Thing, ſo merely "external, as omitting to waſh before Meat, can-"not do."

This was a Doctrine not well-pleaſing to the *Phariſees*, as his Diſciples told him; but they were a Sett of People, whoſe Cenſure he juſtly deſpiſed, *blind Leaders of the Blind* (as he properly enough calls them) whoſe vain Traditions, as having nothing of divine Inſtitution in them, his Purpoſe was to aboliſh. And, from thence departing into the Coaſts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, he entered into an Houſe, with a Deſign to conceal himſelf; but a certain *Syrophœnician* Woman, having got Intelligence of him, came and earneſtly requeſted of him to cure her Daughter, who was ſadly tormented with a Devil. Our Lord (for the Trial of her Faith) ſeemed at firſt to take no notice of her, until

til his Diſciples (to get rid of her Importunity) deſired him to grant her Requeſt, and diſmiſs her. His Miniſtry, he told them, was confined to *Judea*, nor was he properly ſent to any, but *the loſt Sheep of the Houſe* of Iſrael. All this the poor Woman heard, but ſo far was ſhe from being diſcouraged by ſuch Coldneſs, that, advancing nearer, ſhe threw herſelf proſtrate at his Feet, imploring his Help for her Child; and when (in an harſh Metaphor) he told her, that *it was not proper to work thoſe Miracles for an* Heathen, *which were originally deſigned for God's People, the* Jews; the afflicted Mother owned indeed the Truth of what he urged, but then (continuing the ſame Figure) ſhe humbly hoped, *that a poor diſtreſſed* Heathen, *might, in ſome ſmall Meaſure, partake of the Mercies which were more peculiarly promiſed to the* Jews. Which Anſwer was ſo highly expreſſive of the Woman's Humility, Faith, and Reliance, that he granted her Petition; ſo that, when ſhe returned home, ſhe found her Daughter laid upon the Bed, and perfectly well.

We ſhall here add a few explanatory Notes on the foregoing Paſſages.

The *Sanhedrim*, which ſat at *Jeruſalem*, and was the ſupreme Court in all religious Affairs, ſent Meſſengers to *John the Baptiſt*, when he began his Preaching, enquiring who he was, and by what Authority he baptized, *John* i. 19. and, as the *Phariſees* had charged our Saviour's Diſciples with a Violation of the *Sabbath*, in plucking and rubbing the Ears of the Corn, and himſelf with the ſame Crime, in curing the Sick on the *Sabbath-day*, it is not improbable that theſe Accuſations had reached *Jeruſalem*, and that the Scribes and *Phariſees*, here mentioned, were Emiſſaries ſent from

from the *Sanhedrim*, to watch and obſerve our Saviour. And this ſeems the rather to be ſo, becauſe they were ſo very ready (when they could not find him guilty of any Violation of the Laws of God) to pick a Quarrel with him about ſome Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, which he, and his Diſciples, thought not ſo very neceſſary to be obſerved.

The Traditions, in the *Jewiſh* Church, came to gain Credit upon this Preſumption, that *Moſes*, when he received the Law from God on Mount *Sinai*, which he recorded in his five Books, was inſtructed, at the ſame Time, in ſeveral Things which God enjoined him not to commit to Writing, for fear that the *Heathens* ſhould tranſcribe them: That, in theſe Things, *Moſes* inſtructed his Succeſſor *Joſhua*, and from *Joſhua* they were tranſmitted through the *Elders* of the People, by oral Conveyance only, until *Ezra*, after the Return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, collected them all together, and made the *Cabbala*, in ſeventy-two Books, which was kept by *Gamaliel* and others that ſucceeded, as Heads of the *Sanhedrim*, until the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*: That, about an hundred and twenty Years after this, *R. Judas* the Son of *Simon*, compoſed a Book of them, called the *Miſhna*, i. e. *the ſecond Law*, which is indeed the moſt ancient Collection of Traditions that the *Jews* have: That, three hundred Years after this, *R. Jonathan*, meeting with more, compiled them into a larger Volume; and an hundred Years after this, another Rabbi made a Collection of ſuch as were found among the *Jews* who remained in *Babylon*: That theſe two (which are a kind of Supplement and Explication of the *Miſhna*) are called, the

the one the *Talmud* of *Jeruſalem*, and the other, of *Babylon*; and that, by them the *Jews*, at this Day, are governed in Matters eccleſiaſtical, all the World over. Nay, ſo extravagant is their Veneration for them, that we find them prefering them before the written Law; for, that *the Words of the Scribes are more lovely than thoſe of the Law, and the Words of the Ancients of greater Weight than thoſe of the Prophets*, are ſtanding Maxims among them, tho' ſavouring not a little of Blaſphemy. In relation to the particular Cuſtom of waſhing before Meat, their Canon is, that, *Whoſoever deſpiſeth the waſhing of Hands, is worthy to be excommunicated, he comes to Poverty, and will be extirpated out of the World:* For (according to the Senſe of one of their Doctors, *viz. R. Aquiba*) *he that takes Meat with unwaſhed Hands, is worthy of death*; and therefore, when the ſame Doctor was in Priſon, and had not Water enough both to drink and waſh his Hands, he choſe to do the latter; becauſe, *It is better*, ſays he, *to die with Thirſt, than to tranſgreſs the Tradition of the Elders.* 'Tis no Wonder then, that Perſons inured to thoſe Notions, ſhould ſo readily take Exception at our Saviour's omitting what were indeed (though they thought not ſo) Matters of an indifferent Nature.

The Way, whereby the *Jews* made the Law of honouring and ſubſiſting their Father and Mother of no Effect, was, by pretending that whatever their Parents requeſted of them, was a *Corban*, i. e. that they had devoted it as a Gift or Offering to God, or to his Temple; and, whatever was thus devoted, was not to be touched, be the Neceſſity never ſo urgent: For their Canon about Vows was, "That they reach even to Things commanded,

" and

" and take Place, as well in Things required by " the Law, as Things indifferent; that a Man " may be ſo bound by them, that he cannot, with- " out great Sin, do what God had commanded to " be done; and that, in this Caſe, if he makes a " Vow which cannot be performed without break- " ing a Commandment, his Vow muſt be ratified, " and the Commandment violated." This was a Superſtition which the *Phariſees*, and other Doctors of the Law, who had a Property in the Gifts and Oblations, that were made to the Temple, thought themſelves concerned to indulge; and therefore, when any pretended that their Parents ſtood in need of their Help, they told them, that if they did but acquaint them, that it *was a Gift*, or that they had vowed ſuch a Portion of their Eſtate to ſacred Uſes, that would, before God, excuſe them relieving their Parents. Nay they affirmed farther, that if a Man did but in a Paſſion ſay, that the Thing, which another asked of him, was a *Corban*, though it were not actually conſecrated to religious Uſes, this was Vow enough to prevent his relieving that other Perſon, even, putting the Caſe, that it were his own Father, unleſs they ſhould abſolve him from it, which they would undertake to do for ſo many Shekels of Silver, *Levit.* xxvii. ſuch abundant Reaſon had our bleſſed Saviour to charge the *Jewiſh* Doctors with making one of the greateſt Commands in the ſecond Table of the Law void by their Traditions concerning Vows.

In ſeveral Places of the *Goſpel*, our Lord calls the *Phariſees*, *Hypocrites*; not only becauſe they placed the Worſhip of God, and a great deal of Sanctity and Religion, in Ceremonies of human

Inſtitution, and, though they pretended to extraordinary Purity, did all their good Works to be ſeen of Men, *Matth.* xxiii. 5. but, more eſpecially in this Place; becauſe, being ſuperſtitiouſly careful to avoid the outward Pollution of the Body by abſtaining from the Touch of any Thing, which they reputed unclean, and waſhing their Hands whenever they thought they had done ſo, they left that, which was within, *viz.* their Hearts and Affections, full of Iniquity, Uncleanneſs, Extortion, and Exceſs, *Matth.* xiii. 25. and *Luke* xi. 3,. but, for *Chriſt*'s Example in this Particular, we muſt not be forward to pronounce Men *Hypocrites*; becauſe we have neither that Authority, nor that Knowledge of their Hearts, which he had

Tyre and *Sidon* were two conſiderable Cities, ſeated on the *Mediterranean* Sea; and the Country adjoining to them, which lay to the *Weſt* and *North* of *Galilee*, was called the *Coaſts*, or *Territories* of *Tyre* and *Sidon*. The old Inhabitants of this Tract were Deſcendants of *Canaan* (for *Sidon* was his eldeſt Son) and continued in Poſſeſſion of it much longer than they did of any other Part of the Country. The *Greeks* call it *Phœnicia*, and when, by Right of Conqueſt, it became a Province of *Syria*, it took the Name of *Syrophœnicia*; and from hence the Woman, whom St. *Matthew* calls a *Canaanite*, is by St. *Mark* ſtiled a *Syrophœnician*, as being, both by Religion and Language, a *Greek*.

Let us now go on with our Hiſtory. From the Coaſts of *Sidon*, our Lord paſſed Eaſtward to *Decapolis*, and from thence towards the Sea of *Galilee*, where, in his Way, he cured a deaf and dumb

dumb Man, by putting his Fingers in his Ears, and ſome of his Spittle upon his Tongue; and thence repairing to a Mountain, he not only cured every Perſon that was brought unto him, whatever his Malady or Diſtemper was, but, in the Concluſion, fed all the Multitude, which amounted to four thouſand Men, beſides Women and Children (and who, for three Days ſucceſſively, had been attending him) with ſeven Loaves, and a few ſmall Fiſhes.

Having thus diſmiſſed the Company, he embarked, with his Diſciples, for the Coaſt of *Dalmanutha*; but no ſooner was he arrived there, than the *Phariſees*, joining with their Enemies the *Sadducees*, came, and demanded of him a Sign from Heaven, in order to convince them, that he was the true *Meſſiah*: But, having firſt upbraided them with their Acuteneſs, in diſcerning the Face of the Sky, and from thence the Prognoſticks of fair or foul Weather, and their Blindneſs in not perceiving the manifeſt Signs of the *Meſſiah*'s Coming, he remitted them (as he had done before) to the Miracle of his own Reſurrection, and ſo ſailed back with his Diſciples.

His Diſciples, in the Hurry of their Departure, had forgot to take Bread with them; and therefore, when our Saviour, in their Paſſage, gave them Caution to take Care of the Leaven of the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, and they were ignorant enough to take his Words in a litteral Senſe, he firſt gently reproved the Blindneſs of their Underſtandings, and the Shortneſs of their Memories, who had ſo ſoon forgotten his miraculous Multiplication of the Loaves and Fiſhes, at two different Times, and then gave them to underſtand, that his Words did not concern the Leaven of

Bread, but the corrupt Doctrines of the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*.

With this Diſcourſe they landed at *Bethſaida*, which, tho' the Birth-place of ſeveral of the Apoſtles, had yet, by the Perverſeneſs and Infidelity of its Inhabitants, ſo offended him, that, when a blind Man was preſented to him for Cure, he would not do it in the City, in the Sight of the Inhabitants; but, taking him out of the Gate, he anointed his Eyes with his Spittle, and laid his Hands on them. The Man, at firſt, ſaw Objects indiſtinctly, Men like Trees walking; but, when our Lord had laid his Hands upon his Eyes the ſecond Time, he reſtored him to his perfect Sight, and ſo ſent him home, with a Charge not to return into the City, nor to diſcover the Thing to any Perſon belonging to that Place.

From that Place he departed into the Coaſts of *Cæſarea Philippi*, where, being minded to make ſome Trial of his *Apoſtles* Faith and Proficiency, he demanded of them, What Opinion Mankind had of him, and whom they took him to be? Some (ſay they) take you to be *John the Baptiſt*, riſen from the Dead; ſome *Elias*, ſent down from Heaven; and others *Jeremias*, or ſome other of the ancient Prophets, reſtored to Life again: But, when he continued asking what their Notion of him was, and *Simon* (in the Name of the reſt) had made an open Confeſſion, that he *was* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God*, he not only allowed that Confeſſion to be true, and what was confirmed by the Atteſtation of God himſelf, but, in Alluſion to the Name he had given him, which ſignifies a *Rock* or *Stone*, he told *Simon*, "That he would "make him a *Foundation-ſtone*, or a prime Mini-"ſter in building his Church, which ſhould be ſo

"ſtrmly

" firmly eſtabliſhed, that all the Power and Policy " of its Enemies ſhould not be able at any Time " to deſtroy it; and that, for the more orderly " Government of it, he would give him the *Keys* " *of the Kingdom of Heaven*, ſo that his Sentence, " whenever it ſhould regularly exclude, or receive " in any Perſon on Earth, ſhould be ratified and " confirmed in Heaven." But then, to prevent the ill Uſe that might be made of this Diſcovery, he ſtrictly charged his Apoſtles not to declare to any Man, that he was the *Meſſiah*.

Perceiving by this Diſcourſe with *Peter*, that his Diſciples had got a right Notion of his Office and Divinity, he began thenceforward to prepare their Minds for his Sufferings, and to talk more openly of his Death and Reſurrection. One Day therefore, as he was inſiſting on the Sufferings which he was to undergo at *Jeruſalem*, and *Peter*, unable to endure a Thought ſo diſagreeable to the Dignity of his Maſter, deſired him to deſiſt, he gave him a very ſharp rebuke, as a Perſon whoſe Advice croſſed his gracious Purpoſes of Man's Redemption, and ſavoured of nothing but worldly Grandeur; and therefore, to extinguiſh in them all Notions of a *temporal Kingdom*, he called his Diſciples, and told them, that, " Whoever pretended " to profeſs his Religion, ſhould take up his " Croſs, or patiently ſubmit to all manner of Per- " ſecutions, in ſure and certain Hope of an happy " Immortality, which he would procure for his " Followers, when he was in his Kingdom, in " which, ſome that were then preſent among them, " e're it were long (but certainly before the Day " of their Death) ſhould ſee him happily inſtat- " ed."

About eight Days after this, our Lord, to re-

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vive the Hearts of his Diſciples, as well to inſtruct them more fully in the Nature of his Kingdom, thought it not improper to give ſome of them, at leaſt, a Specimen of his future Glory, and accordingly, taking with him his three moſt intimate Apoſtles, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, he aſcended an high Mountain, and there (while he was employed in Prayer) he was ſuddenly transformed into another kind of Appearance; for a bright Luſtre darted from his Face, more glorious than the Sun; and a dazzling Splendor piercing from his Body through his Garments, made them appear whiter than Snow, and more radiant than the Light. During this heavenly Scene, there appeared *Moſes* and *Elias*, clothed with all the Brightneſs and Majeſty of a glorified State, familiarly converſing with him, and diſcourſing of his Death and Sufferings.

While this Intercourſe continued between theſe three, *Peter* and his two Fellow-Apoſtles were fallen aſleep, but, waking juſt before their Departure, they were exceedingly ſurpriſed, and terrified at the Sight of ſo much Glory and Majeſty. *Peter* indeed begged of his Maſter, that they might continue in that happy Place, *and erect three Tents, one for him, and the other two for* Moſes *and* Elias: But while he was thus talking, ſcarce knowing what he ſaid in his Fright and Tranſport, a bright and ſhining Cloud ſuddenly came over them, and a Voice from thence proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him.* Upon which the Apoſtles were ſeized with a greater Conſternation than ever, and fell proſtrate upon the Ground; but, upon our Lord's touching and encouraging them, they looked up, and ſaw none but him, for the other two were vaniſhed.

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As they deſcended the Mount, he ſtrictly commanded them not to tell any Man what ſtrange Things they had ſeen, *until he was riſen from the Dead.* They were ready to obey his Commands, but did not rightly underſtand his laſt Words, and therefore they had ſome Altercations among themſelves concerning the Meaning of his *riſing from the Dead:* And another Difficulty they had to ſolve, for, having ſeen *Elias* with our Saviour upon the Mount, they could not forbear asking him, What Reaſon the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had for aſſerting, that that Prophet was to come upon the Earth before the *Meſſiah?* To which our Saviour replied, That theſe *Jewiſh* Doctors were not miſtaken in their Notion, becauſe *Elias* was in Effect come already, and had received the ſame bad Treatment from his Countrymen, that himſelf in a ſhort Time was to expect; from whence they perceived, that, by the *Elias* he ſpoke of, he plainly intended *John the Baptiſt.*

We ſhall now, in our uſual manner, explain the Difficulties that occur in this Period of our Hiſtory.

Decapolis is a Country in *Paleſtine*, which was ſo called becauſe in contained *ten Cities*, ſome ſituated on the *Eaſt*, and others on the *Weſt-ſide* of the River *Jordan*, the 1ſt and principal City is *Scythopolis*, and the reſt (according to *Pliny*) are, 2d, *Philadelphia:* 3d, *Raphanæ*; 4th, *Gadara*; 5th, *Hippos*; 6th, *Dion*; 7th, *Pella*; 8th, *Geraſa*; 9th, *Canatha*; and 10th, *Damaſcus*; tho' others reckon them after another manner, as *Pliny* himſelf obſerves.

Chriſt often made uſe of viſible Signs, to repreſent that divine inviſible Virtue, which was inherent in him, and which, upon that Occaſion, he intended

intended to exert: And therefore, becauſe deaf Perſons ſeem to have their Ears cloſed, he put his Fingers into the Man's Ears, to intimate, that, by his Power, he would open them; and, becauſe the Tongue of the Dumb ſeems to be tied, or to cleave to the Palate, therefore he moiſten'd it with Spittle, to ſignify that he would looſe and give free Motion to it. Theſe, 'tis true, were not capable to effect the Cure, but they had this Uſe in them, that they excited the Obſervation and Attention of the People, before whom theſe Cures were wrought.

What St. *Matthew* calls *Magdala*, St. *Mark* names *Dalmanutha*; and the Reaſon hereof is, becauſe theſe two Places lay very near together, and *Dalmanutha* very probably within the Precincts of *Magdala*.

The Leaven of the *Phariſees* was their Hypocriſy, and too ſcrupulous Obſervance of the Traditions of their Elders; and that of the *Sadducees* was their Denial of the Exiſtence of Angels and Devils, the Reſurrection of the Body, and the Immortality of the Soul; ſo that the Meaning of our Saviour's Caution to his Apoſtles is, To avoid the Principles of thoſe, who place the ſum of their Religion in outward Performances, which avails nothing to the Sanctification of the Soul; and to reject all ſuch Doctrines as tended to ſubvert Religion, by cutting off all Hopes of Happineſs in a future State.

The Reaſon of our Saviour's charging the Man whom he had cured of Blindneſs, that he ſhould not return to the City, is founded upon the Infidelity of the People of *Bethſaida*, wherewith he upbraids them, *Matth.* xi. 21.

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Christ takes Peter & the two Sons of Zebe-
dee with him, to be Witneſes of his ſorrow
Math. 26. 36.

The City of *Cæſarea Philippi* is ſituated near the Head of the River *Jordan*, and was by the *Canaanites* called *Laiſh*, or *Lechem*, Judg. xviii. 7. but, being taken by ſome of the *Danites*, it was by them called *Dan*, and is generally reputed the utmoſt Border Northward of the Land of *Iſrael*. It was uſually called, by *Heathen* Writers, *Paneas*, from the adoining Spring, *Paneum*, or *Panion*, which is commonly taken for the Fountain-head of *Jordan*. *Auguſtus Cæſar* gave it, and all the Territories belonging to it, to *Herod the Great*. He having re-built the Place, gave it and the Tetrarchy of *Iturea* and *Trachonitis* (which it adjoining) to his youngeſt Son *Philip*; who, when he had enlarged and beautified it, ſo as to make it the Capital of his Dominions, and chief Place of his Reſidence, gave it the Name of *Cæſarea Philippi*; partly, to complement *Tiberius Cæſar*, who was then Emperor; partly, to preſerve the Memory of his own Name; and partly, to diſtinguiſh it from another *Cæſarea*, mentioned in *Acts* x. 1. ſituate on the *Mediterranean*, and built by his Father in Honour of his great Benefactor *Auguſtus Cæſar*.

Thoſe, who held that *Jeſus* was *John the Baptiſt* riſen from the Dead, were of the ſame Opinion with *Herod the Tetrarch*, *Matth.* xiv. 2. and ſeem to have imbibed the Notion of the *Phariſees*; who (according to *Joſephus*) uſed to ſay, that *a good Man might eaſily return to Life again*. Thoſe, who took him for *Elias*, ran into the general Opinion of the Nation, that *Elias* was to come before the *Meſſiah*, and anoint him when he came; and therefore, notwithſtanding his Doctrine and Miracles, they could not conceive him to be the

Meſſiah, ſo long as his mean Appearance was contrary to their Expectations: And thoſe, who thought him to be *Jeremias*, ſeem to have eſpouſed the Sentiments of their Doctors, who looked upon that Prophet as the Head of the whole Order, not improbably upon the Character which God gives him, *Before I formed thee in the Belly I knew thee, and before thou w'ſt out of the Womb I ſanctified and I ordained thee, a Prophet to the Nations*, Jer. i. 5.

That the reſt of the great Truth which St. *Peter* declares, *viz.* that *Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of the living God*, no one can doubt, who calls to Mind the Atteſtation made of it before by *John the Baptiſt*, John i. 34. the frequent Confeſſion of it by evil Spirits diſpoſſeſſed before their Eyes, *Mark* iii. 15. and that full Declaration of it in the whole Fraternity, *We believe, and are ſure, that thou art that Chriſt, the Son of the living God*, *John* vi. 69. for which Reaſon, we find the Fathers, upon this Occaſion, ſpeaking of St. *Peter*, as the Mouth, the Tongue, the Voice of the Church, and a kind of Foreman to the reſt of the Apoſtles; for this they might think a Matter of Decency and good Manners, a Means to prevent Confuſion and Diſorder, and a Token of that Union and Harmony, which was among them, that one Man ſhould ſpeak for all the reſt. And why that *one Man* ſhould be St. *Peter*, rather than any of the reſt, may very well be imputed to the Seniority of his Age, the natural Fervor of his Temper, and his longer Attendance upon our bleſſed Saviour, than ſeveral of the reſt had been employ'd in. Theſe are ſufficient Reaſons for his delivering the Judgment of the Company, and for

our

our accounting his Confeſſion the common Voice of all to a Queſtion, which had evidently been propounded to them all.

Our Saviour's Anſwer in the Words in the Text are, *Fleſh and Blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father which is in Heaven*, Matth. xvi. 17. but how did God reveal this to St. *Peter?* Thoſe who pretend that he had a *peculiar Revelation*, not vouchſafed to any others, without which he could not have owned *Chriſt* to have been *the Son of God*, muſt not only allow the like Revelation to *Nathaniel*, John ii. 49. to the *Centurion*, who was preſent at our Lord's Crucifixion, *Matth.* xxvii. 54. and to all others, who made Declaration of the ſame Faith; but muſt likewiſe excuſe all thoſe *Jews* who did not believe in *Chriſt*; becauſe it was not in their Power ſo to do without this peculiar Revelation. Without running ourſelves into thoſe Premunires therefore, we may reaſonably conclude, that the Senſe of our Saviour's Words is this, ——— "What others ſay of me, *viz.* that I am "*John*, *Elias*, *Jeremias*, or the like, this thou haſt "learnt from Men; but the Faith which thou "haſt now confeſſed concerning me, though it "required of thee a due Attention to the Proofs "given of it, yet, ſince thoſe Proofs are the "Doctrine which I teach from God, and the Mi-"racles, done in Confirmation of it, are apparently "the Finger of God, thy Faith muſt be acknow-"ledged to be the Reſult, not of human Wiſdom, "but of divine Revelation. God has given thee "a teachable and intelligent Mind, to perceive, "by my Doctrine and Miracles, that I am the "true *Meſſiah*, notwithſtanding the Obſcurity of "my Appearance; and therefore thou mayſt be "truly ſaid to be *taught of God*, becauſe my Doc-

"trine is the *Word*, and my Miracles are the "*Power* of God."

Peter was ſo called, either becauſe his being the Apoſtle of the *Jews*, to whom the Goſpel was firſt tendered, might make him, in ſome Senſe, one of the firſt Foundations of the Chriſtian Church, *Eph.* ii. 20. or becauſe the Firmneſs and Reſolution, wherewith he ſupported the Chriſtian Cauſe, even to the Day of his Martyrdom, was very eminent and remarkable.

It is very evident, that, whereas the Word *Church* is capable of two Senſes, and taken, in common Speech, ſometimes for a Society of Perſons worſhipping God, and ſometimes for a Place ſet apart for the publick Performance of ſuch Worſhip; our Saviour intends it here in the latter of theſe Senſes, and that the *Building of this Church* (which is a Metaphor of frequent Uſe in the *New Teſtament*) ſignifies the doing all thoſe Things, either in private Chriſtians, or publick Communities of them, which may contribute to their Growth in Grace and Goodneſs, their mutual Strength and Support, their Perfection and Continuance; and accordingly, Chriſtians thus united together, are called *a ſpiritual Houſe*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *an heavenly Building, fitly framed together, and an Habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. ii. 21, 22.

The Words in the Text are,——*The Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, Matth. xvi. 18. Some Interpreters mean by the Word *Hades*, which we tranſlate *Hell*, the State or Place of the Dead; and by the *Gates of Hades*, the *Power of Death*; and ſo the Words, applied to the Members of *Chriſt*'s myſtical Body, or to particular Chriſtians, will mean, "That tho' at preſent Death has the

"Dominion

" Dominion over them, yet ſhall not his Conqueſt " of thoſe that die in the Lord, be abſolute and " final. They ſhall not continue dead to all Eter- " nity; but ſhall revive a ſecond Time to a bet- " ter Life, and triumph over this laſt great Enemy " of Mankind." Others by *Hell* underſtand the Place of infernal Torments; and ſo, by an eaſy Figure, apply it to the Devil and his Angels, inhabiting thoſe Regions of Darkneſs; but then, becauſe the *Gates of Cities* are not only, in all Countries Places of Strength, but among the *Jews* more eſpecially, were Places of *Judicature*, and where Magiſtrates met to conſult for the Security of the Publick; it hence comes to paſs, that by *the Gates of Hell* they mean the *Strength* and *Policy* of the Wicked, and ſo make the Senſe of our Saviour's promiſe to be this,——That notwithſtanding all the wicked Contrivances of *Satan* and his Inſtruments, to deſtroy the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity in the World, yet all their Power and Policy ſhould not be able to effect it. *Chriſt*'s holy Religion ſhould ſtand and flouriſh, in deſpight of their wicked Contrivances; and, however a Defection might happen in ſome particular Places, to the End of the World he ſhould never want a Society of Men, confeſſing, with St. *Peter*, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of the living God*, Matth. xvi. 16.

In ſeveral Parts of this *Goſpel* we find our Saviour enjoining the People, whom he had cured, not to make any Publication of his Miracles, *Matt.* viii. 4. and ix. 30. but it is an Injunction of a particular Nature, not to diſcover that he was the *Chriſt*, tho' this was an Article neceſſary for every Man to know and believe, in order to his Salvation.

tion. Now, this was a Point neceſſary for all to know, yet the Apoſtles were not the proper Perſons, at this Time, to declare it; becauſe it might look like a kind of Confederacy between them, if they ſhould prove too laviſh in the Commendations of their Maſter. It would much better become his infinite Wiſdom therefore, to find out himſelf a proper Opportunity for the Diſcovery of this great Truth, which could not be preached *out of Seaſon*, without drawing the Envy of the *Phariſees* upon him, and obſtructing the Progreſs of the Goſpel; which could hardly be believed, conſidering the low Circumſtances wherein he appeared; and which, had it been believed, might have encouraged the Attempt of the *Jews* to come and make him a King, *John* vi. 15. What therefore our Saviour ſays to his three Apoſtles, in Relation to his Transfiguration, that they ſhould *tell no Man of it*, until *he was riſen from the Dead*, *Matth.* xvii. 9. is applicable to this Paſſage likewiſe. For, after his Reſurrection, they were by Office to be his Witneſſes, and to declare to others that he was the *Chriſt*; becauſe they could then do it, not only without Suſpicion of Confederacy, but with greater Advantages and Succeſs, after that *Chriſt* had taken Poſſeſſion of his Kingdom; and had teſtified this by ſitting down at the Right-hand of Power, and by ſending down upon them the Holy Ghoſt, to enable them to confirm their Teſtimony.

Peter's Words in the *Greek*, tranſlated, *Be it far from thee Lord*, we may render, *Be merciful to thy ſelf*, *Spare thy ſelf*. "Since the Rulers at *Jeruſalem* have ſuch malevolent Deſigns againſt thee, why ſhould thou think of going any more among them?

them? If they intend to evil intreat thee, and take away thy Life, *be thou kind and favourable to thy ſelf*, avoid the Danger by keeping at a Diſtance from it, and conſult thine own Preſervation by continuing here." This ſeems to be the proper Senſe of St. *Peter*'s Words, and they were doubtleſs ſpoken with a good Intention, and ſingular Affection for his Maſter, but ſtill they argued great Weakneſs in him, in pretending to contradict one, whom he had juſt before acknowledged to be *the Chriſt, the Son of God*, and denote him ignorant of the Redemption of Mankind by that Death, which God in his wiſe Counſel had dteermined.

The Words of our bleſſed Saviour upon this Occaſion are, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an Offence to me*, Matth. xvi. 23. Not that we are to think that our Saviour ever imagined, that St. *Peter* had any pernicious Deſigns againſt him, as the great Enemy of Mankind has, when he tempts and deludes them into Sin; but his Meaning is, that his Interpoſition in this Affair was very unſeaſonable, and highly repugnant to his Deſign of coming into the World, which was to ſave it. "Thou thinkeſt perhaps (ſays he) *Peter*, that in this thy Advice thou ſheweſt thy Kindneſs to me, as a Friend, that reſpects my Welfare, and art tender of my Preſervation; but, inſtead of that, thou art an Adverſary to me (for ſo the Word *Satan* ſignifies, *Numb.* xxii. 32. 2 *Sam.* xix. 23. 1 *Kings* v. 4.) in thy endeavouring to draw me aſide from doing what is my Father's Will and Command, *John* x. 18. I told thee that *I muſt ſuffer*; that ſuch is the determinate Counſel of God, and ſuch my fixed Purpoſe and Reſolution; and therefore all Advice to the contrary is what I cannot

not away with; it is an Offence to me; it is an Abomination." So dear was the Salvation of Mankind to *Jeſus Chriſt*, that he could not hear even one of the Chief of his Apoſtles diſſuading him from it, without ſome Emotions of Anger and Indignation.

Among ſeveral Nations it was a Cuſtom for the Criminal to bear the Croſs, whereon he was to ſuffer, to the Place of Execution; and, in Alluſion to this, our Saviour makes uſe of this Phraſe to denote our chearfully bearing thoſe Trials and Perſecutions, which the divine Providence brings upon us in the Execution of our Duty, and our Adherence to his moſt holy Religion.

Our Saviour's Words,——*Verily I ſay unto you, there are ſome of them who are ſtanding here, who ſhall not taſte of Death, till they ſee the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom*, Matth. xvi. 28. ſome Interpreters both ancient and modern, underſtand of our Lord's Transfiguration on the Mount; in which there was ſome Glimpſe of the Glory of his Father, and the Attendance of Angels; but, beſides that this happened too ſoon (no more than ſix Days) after theſe Words were ſpoken, to need the Expreſſion of *ſome of them not ſeeing Death* until it came to paſs, which muſt at leaſt denote ſome Diſtance of Time, 'tis very plain, that, at this wonderful Sight, none of the three Apoſtles could behold *Chriſt coming in his Kingdom*, becauſe his Kingdom did not commence till after his Reſurrection, when *all Power both in Heaven and Earth was given him*, Matth. xviii. 18. Others imagine that the Paſſage relates to the great Day of Judgment, becauſe 'tis ſaid, that *Chriſt* will *reward every Man according to his Work*, ver. 27. But then, on the other Hand, it may be alledged, that

that there was none in the Company then ſtanding there, who was not to die, or to taſte of Death (which is the *Jewiſh* Phraſe) long before the Coming *of that great and terrible Day of the Lord:* And therefore others have concluded, that *this Coming of* Chriſt *in his Kingdom* relates to another Event, *viz.* the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation, wherein our Lord may properly enough be ſaid to *come in the Glory of his Father, and with his Angels,* to puniſh the *Jews,* in deſtroying them; and reward the *Chriſtians,* in preſerving them; *according to their Works.* This happened above forty Years after our Saviour's Death, when ſome in the Company (as particularly *John* the *Evangeliſt* actually was) might be alive, and Witneſſes of the Accompliſhment of our Lord's Menaces againſt that devoted City and Nation. This is the popular Interpretation at preſent, but I cannot ſee, why the other Parts of our Saviour's Exaltation may not be taken into the Account; for, as he began to enter upon his Kingdom by his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion into Heaven, ſo his ſending the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles, and the terrible Judgment which he brought upon the *Jewiſh* Nation, may well be looked upon as the Effects and Conſequences of his glorious Reign.

What St. *Luke* calls *about eight Days,* Chap. ix 29. St. *Matthew,* and St. *Mark* make *after ſix Days:* But the Reaſon of this ſeeming Diſagreement is, that the two laſt *Evangeliſts* compute only the intire Days between our Saviour's Diſcourſe, and his going up into the Mount, and therefore ſtile them ſix; whereas St. *Luke,* including both the Days of his Diſcourſe, and his Aſcent, calls them eight Days. And this is evident from the

Word *about*; which when any Number is mentioned, is always added to ſignify, that it is not exact, but wants ſomething to make it compleat, as may be ſeen in *Matth.* xiv. 21. *Luke* i. 56. iii. 23. xxiii. 44. *John* iv. 6. xix. 14. *Acts* ii. 41, *&c.*

That the Mountain on which our Saviour was transfigured, was Mount *Tabor* (which ſtood in the Midſt of the *Lower Galilee*, at an equal Diſtance between the *Mediterranean* and the Sea of *Tiberias*) is a Matter confirmed by the Voice of all *Antiquity*, but ſome modern Writers are of a different Opinion; becauſe *Tabor* (ſay they) does not ſtand in the Way between *Cæſarea Philippi* and *Capernaum*; and that our Saviour travelled from *Cæſarea* to this Mount, (which is almoſt through the whole Length of *Galilee*) is a little too much to ſuppoſe. *Lightfoot* in *Mark* ix. But this he had Space enough to do in the ſix intervening Days between his Diſcourſe and his Transfiguration; and that he really did ſo, is made very probable, both from St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, who ſeem to intimate, that after he had finiſhed his Diſcourſe with his Diſciples, he entered immediately upon his Journey; and, accordingly, we hear nothing more of him, untill the Expiration of ſix whole Days, *Matth.* xvii. 1. *Luke* ix. 2. but, after his Return from the Mount, and Cure of the *Demoniac*, that was brought before him, 'tis ſaid, that he and his *Diſciples departed thence, and paſſed through* Galilee, *i. e.* the remaining Part of *Galilee*, to come to *Capernaum*, Luke iii. 30, 33.

The Doctrine of the general Reſurrection they could not but underſtand, for that the *Phariſees* believed, *Acts* xxiv. 15. and of that *Martha* makes Acknow-

Acknowledgment, *John* xi. 24. nor could they be ignorant of the Meaning of any particular Man's Riſing from the Dead, for of that they had Inſtances in the *Old Teſtament*, and had lately ſeen an Example of it at the Gates of *Naim*, Luke vii. 15. but being taught out of their Law, *that* Chriſt *was to abide for ever*, John xii. 34. and *that of his Kingdom there ſhould be no End*, Luke i. 33. they could not tell how to reconcile his Death (which was to be previous to his Reſurrection) to the Prediction of the Prophets, and their own Conceptions of his temporal Kingdom; and therefore we may obſerve, that when *Chriſt* was dead, their Hopes died with him, *We truſted, that it had been he who ſhould have redeemed* Iſrael, *Luke* xxiv. 21. but that, at his Reſurrection they revived again, which made them ask, *Wilt thou, at this Time, reſtore the Kingdom to* Iſrael? *Acts* i. 6.

DISSERTATION I.

When the Water of the Pool of Bethesda *firſt had, and loſt its ſanative Quality: How it came by it: Why it cured but one at once. An Objection anſwered, by ſhewing that St.* John's *Goſpel was to ſupply the Defects of the other three* Evangeliſts. *The raiſing the Widow's Son, and* Jairus's *Daughter, both real Miracles: Why our Saviour charged her Parents to conceal the latter. No Injuſtice in the Deſtruction of the Swine of* Gadara. *The End of* Chriſt's *Transfiguration: Why on a Mountain:*

Why the three Apoſtles and not the Multitude admitted to it: The Nature of it: That Moſes *and* Elias *were perſonally there; and what Subjects they diſcourſed on. Why the* Baptiſt *ſent to enquire concerning* Jeſus. *Our Saviour's Parables agreeable to the* Eaſtern *Way of reaſoning; and not obſcure. Why he would not ſhew a Sign from Heaven. The Significancy of the Sign of* Jonas. *Why* Chriſt *made choice of mean Men to be his Apoſtles. Why Learning,* &c. *is required in* Chriſt's *Miniſters now. Why our Saviour might be innocently angry with the* Phariſees. *What is meant by our Saviour's being beſide himſelf.* Chriſt's *Promiſe to* Peter *explained. What is meant by the* Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: *What by our Lord's whole Speech to* Peter; *which gives him no Superiority over the other Apoſtles. Several Notions about the Sin againſt the* Holy Ghoſt: *What it really is: Dr.* Whitby's *Notion groundleſs: The Heinouſneſs of the Sin; and why it is unpardonable. The Meaning of eating* Chriſt's *Fleſh and drinking his Blood: Not to be taken in a literal Senſe.* Heathen *Teſtimonies relating to this Part of the Evangelical Hiſtory.*

IT is objected, by ſuch as cavil at the Scriptures, that the Pool of *Betheſda* (if what St. *John* relates of it be true) was certainly one of the moſt remarkable Places in all *Jeruſalem.* Its Cures were ſo wonderful, and ſo highly conducive to the Honour of the *Jewiſh* Nation, that, for what Reaſon the other *Evangeliſts* ſhould ſay nothing of them, we can hardly imagine; but why *Joſephus*, who profeſſedly wrote the Hiſtory of the *Jews*, and

and is always forward enough to boaſt in their Praiſe, ſhould give us no Manner of Account of this peculiar Manifeſtation of God's diſtinguiſhing Providence over that People, is a Thing utterly unaccountable. Since the *Evangeliſt* therefore ſtands alone in this Story, it would have been ſome Satisfaction to his Readers, had he a little more minutely recounted, when this Pool firſt acquired its miraculous Quality, and how long it retained it; upon what particular Occaſions, and how often the Angel deſcended to trouble its Waters; and by what Means its Waters, when troubled, became both impregnated with a ſanative Virtue, and yet ſo limited in their Operation, as to cure but one diſeaſed Perſon at once.

The Raiſing of the Widow's Son to Life again, might poſſibly be a true Miracle, tho' Inſtances there have been of the miſtaken Death of Perſons, who from a State of Lethargy have revived; as might be the Caſe of the Ruler's Daughter likewiſe: becauſe we find our Saviour ſo ſtrictly injoining her Parents to conceal the Miracle. But, whatever may be ſaid in Behalf of theſe, it is highly improbable, that what happened to the Demoniacks, in the Country of the *Gadarens*, ſhould be true, not only becauſe the *Jews*, who dwelt in theſe Parts, were prohibited to eat Swines Fleſh, and under Pain of an Anathema, forbidden to keep any in their Country; but, even upon the Suppoſition, that the Swine belonged to the neighbouring *Gentiles*, it will be no eaſy Matter to vindicate the Goodneſs and Juſtice of *Chriſt*, in permitting ſo large an Herd thus to be deſtroyed, and their Owners injured in ſo egregious a Manner.

Our

Our Lord's Transfiguration on the Mount was doubtleſs a glorious Sight; but ſtill we are at a Loſs for the Reaſon of his appearing in ſuch an extroaordinary Manner at this Time, rather than another; for his making a Mountain, rather than a Valley the Scene, and his Apoſtles (who were of his Party) rather than the Multitude (who wanted Conviction) the Witneſſes of this his Majeſty; nor can we conceive, why the true *Moſes* and *Elias* (not any Spectres or Apparitions in their Likeneſs) ſhould be preſent with *Jeſus* on the Mount, and the Apoſtles over-hear them diſcourſe together, and yet not leave us one Word of what was the Subject of their Converſation.

We cannot but admire likewiſe, why *John the Baptiſt*, who was ſent into the World for this very Purpoſe, that he might *bear Witneſs of* Chriſt (as if he had now forgot himſelf, or was grown diffident of what he had ſo often teſtified to others) ſhould ſend his Diſciples to enquire of him, whether he was the true *Meſſiah* or no: Why our bleſſed Saviour, who, *as a Teacher ſent from Heaven*, was to inſtruct the People in the moſt plain Truths, made uſe of the parabolical Method (wherein there is a manifeſt Obſcurity) eſpecially ſince the declared End of his doing ſo, is ſaid to be, *That ſeeing, they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand*, Luke viii. 10. Why he did not vouchſafe the *Phariſees a Sign from Heaven*, to approve himſelf the Prophet foretold by *Moſes*, and as *Moſes* had done before him, eſpecially ſince the *Sign of the Prophet* Jonas, which was only typical of his future Reſurrection, was incompetent for a preſent Sign, and incapable of giving them any

Satisfaction: Or laſtly, Why he made ſuch mean Inſtruments, as obſcure illiterate Fiſhermen, to be the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, when, in all ſubſequent Ordinations, a tolerable Stock of Knowledge and Learning, as well as ſome Influence and Authority among the People, was thought no bad Qualifications for that Office.

Whether the *Evangeliſts* have given us a right Repreſentation of our Saviour's Behaviour; we ſhall not pretend to determine; but a Perſon of a philoſophic Soul, much more of a divine Original, ſhould be ſeated above all paſſionate Reſentments, one would think, and look upon his Enemies (if he had any) with Pity and Contempt, rather than with *Anger* and Indignation; and ſo calm and compoſed ſhould his whole Deportment be, as to give no Umbrage to any, much leſs to his neareſt Relations (who may be preſumed to know him beſt) to call in Queſtion the Soundneſs of his Intellectuals, or to come to apprehend him at any Time, under Pretence that *he was beſide himſelf*, Mark iii. 21.

Whatever ſome Proteſtants may imagine, we cannot but think, that our bleſſed Lord inveſted St. *Peter* with a certain Pre-eminence above the reſt of his Apoſtles, when upon him he promiſes *to build his Church, and to give him the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*: But what the unpardonable Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt does properly import, and in what Senſe we are ſaid *to eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and to drink his Blood*, both *Proteſtants* and *Papiſts* have been at a long Puzzle to find out: And therefore no Wonder, that ſome of our Lord's firſt Diſciples, upon hearing of theſe hard Sayings, which are not yet diſcovered, and perhaps

haps never will, *went back and walked no more with him*, John vi. 66.

In Anſwer to theſe Objections, we muſt conſider, that St. *John*, according to the general Senſe of Antiquity, having peruſed the other *Evangeliſts*, and obſerved in what Particulars they were Defective, at the Perſuaſion of the other Biſhops of *Aſia*, was prevailed upon to write his Goſpel, as a Supplement to their Omiſſions. Whoever will give himſelf the Trouble to compare his Hiſtory with that of the other *Evangeliſts*, will find this Notion, in a great Meaſure verified. For (not to mention other Particulars) our Saviour's Miracles, antecedent to his Reſurrection, as they are recorded by St. *John*, are no more than Eight. 1*ſt*, His turning Water into Wine at the Marriage of *Cana* in *Galilee*. 2*d*, His telling the *Samaritan* Woman the Secrets of her Life. 3*d*, His healing the Nobleman's Son at *Capernaum*. 4*th*, His curing the lame Man at the Pool of *Betheſda*. 5*th*, His feeding five thouſand Men with five Barley-Loaves and two Fiſhes. 6*th*, His walking upon the Surface of the Water, and calming the Storm at Sea. 7*th*, His giving Sight to a blind Man, by anointing his Eyes with Clay. And 8*th*, his raiſing *Lazarus* from the Dead. Now all theſe are omitted by the former Evangeliſts, except the 5*th* and 6*th*, which St. *John* ſeems to have recorded, chiefly to introduce a moral Diſcourſe, which our Saviour took Occaſion to make to the People, and which the other ſacred Penmen had omitted; which is a plain Argument, that the Intent of St. *John*'s Goſpel was to ſupply the Defects of the other three; and that therefore their Silence is no Manner of

Argu-

Argument againſt St. *John*'s Account of the Pool of *Betheſda*.

It may ſeem a little Strange, indeed, that *Joſephus* ſhould give us no Account of it, eſpecially when the ſanative Virtue of its Waters, occaſioned by ſo extraordinary a Means, could not but redound to the Honour of his Country. But when it is conſidered, that the like Omiſſions have been frequently made by other Hiſtorians, who in their Writings have neglected to inſert ſeveral conſiderable Matters of Antiquity, merely becauſe they were ſo familiar and well known to them: When it is conſidered that *Joſephus*, in particular, wrote his Hiſtory for the Information of the *Greeks* and learned *Romans*, who were Heathens, and for fear of ſhocking their Belief, is very tender of dwelling too much upon Miracles: When it is conſidered, that he is intirely ſilent in ſeveral other Inſtances, that bear ſome Relation to our Saviour *Chriſt*; that he does not ſo much as intimate the Slaughter of the Infants at *Bethlehem*, mentioned by St. *Matthew*, nor give any clear Account of the *Roman Cenſus*, or Taxation, which occaſioned our Lord to be born at *Bethlehem*, as it is recorded by St. *Luke*: When it is conſidered, that the miraculous Cure of the impotent Man, by *Jeſus*, had ſo viſible a Connection, that he could not, in Decency, give an Account of the one, without making ſome Mention of the other, and therefore choſe rather to decline the Hiſtory of both; and laſtly, when it is conſidered that this Pool (according to *Tertullian*) *ceaſed to be beneficial to the* Jews, *upon their final Perſeverance in Blaſphemy and Infidelity againſt* Chriſt: There is no Wonder at all, that *Joſephus*, who was very defective in other Matters, and no great Lover of Miracles, ſhould

omit giving us an Account of a Pool, whoſe Virtue was extinct and gone, when firſt he wrote his Antiquities, and which he could not well make Mention of, without giving an implicit Honour to *Chriſt*.

That, upon the Death of our bleſſed Saviour, this Pool might loſe its ſanative Quality, is no improbable Conjecture, becauſe the *Jews* no longer deſerved ſuch a peculiar Bleſſing; but when at firſt it came to be impregnated with it, is not a Matter of ſo eaſy Solution. The Words in the Text are, that *an Angel went down at a certain Seaſon*, which a learned Author chooſes rather to render *at the Seaſon* (i. e. of the Paſſover) *and troubled the Water*; from whence he infers, that the firſt Time of this ſupernatural Moving of the Water, and conſequently, of the Pool's receiving a miraculous healing Quality, was at this Paſſover; which was the ſecond after the Commencement of our Saviour's publick Miniſtry, and the Reaſon he aſſigns for its being this, rather than any other Paſſover, is, *That our Saviour having gone through all the Cities of* Galilee, *and moſt of the other Parts of the Country of* Judea, *preaching and healing Diſeaſes, came up to* Jeruſalem, *at the Paſſover, with an Intent to fix his Abode there; that to prepare his Way before him, God might give this Pool an healing Quality, thereby to ſhew the* Jews (*in a typical Manner*) *that the* Meſſenger of *the Covenant* was coming among them, to *open a Fountain to the Houſe of* David, *and to the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, for Sin and for Uncleanneſs; *but that, inſtead of giving him a kind Reception, they took* Counſel together, how they might drive him from them, *and, upon his Departure, the miraculous Virtue of the Water ceaſed.* The only Objection

jection againſt this Hypotheſis is, it makes the Miracle no more than a Week or ten Days Continuance, which is too ſhort a Space for ſo great a Company, as is here repreſented, to be gathered together, to have taken up their Abode, as it were, in the Apartments of this Hoſpital, and to be acquainted ſo perfectly (as the Paralytick, in his Diſcourſe with our Saviour, ſeems to be) with the Nature of the Pool, and the Manner of its preter-natural Perturbation: And therefore (to follow the Generality of Commentators) tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe that its medicinal Virtue began at the Time of this ſecond Paſſover, yet we ſtill adhere to the Opinion of *Tertullian*, and ſay, that at certain Times at leaſt, it continued with the *Jews* (and a ſingular Bleſſing it was) until they had filled the Meaſure of their Iniquity, *By denying the Holy One, and the Juſt, and by killing the Prince of Life.*

How the Waters of this Pool came by their ſanative Quality, Opinions, in ſome Meaſure, have been divided. Our learned *Hammond* (who ſometimes affects a Singularity of Interpretation) ſuppoſes that the Waters became medicinal, by being impregnated with an healing Warmth from the Blood and Entrails of the ſacrificed Beaſts that were waſhed there; and that the Angel, in the Text, is not to be underſtood of any of theſe celeſtial Beings, that are uſually diſtinguiſhed by that Name, but only of a common Meſſenger, *viz.* an Officer or Servant of the Prieſt, who, at a proper Seaſon, was ſent by him to ſtir the Pool. The great *Bartholine* ſuppoſes, that theſe Waters were naturally medicinal, and that their Commotion was occaſioned by an extraordinary Fermen-

tation of ſome Mineral in them; and therefore he makes the Angel no more than a divine Power, which originally gave this Efficacy, tho' it was exerted in a natural Way. But, beſides that, the Word *angelos* ſeldom occurs in the former, and never in this Senſe, in any hiſtorical Narrative in Scripture, there are theſe plain Objections againſt both Hypotheſes, *viz.* That, be the Waters impregnated with what Ingredient we pleaſe (had their Operation been mechanical) they muſt neceſſarily have cured more than one Perſon, at every Commotion or Fermentation; and yet they never can be ſuppoſed of Efficacy enough to cure all manner of Diſeaſes in an Inſtant, and at one ſingle Immerſion, as the Waters of *Betheſda* are repreſented to do: And therefore, waving all ſuch groundleſs Suppoſitions, we may be allowed to ſet the Authority of an antient Father of the Church againſt theſe modern Names, and ſay, *That the Angel, that deſcended at a certain Seaſon, gave the Water its medicinal Virtue; for the Nature of the Water was not ſanative in itſelf, (if it had, Cures would have always happened) but the whole depended on the Virtue communicated to it by the Angel.*

Now the true Reaſon why the Virtue thus communicated to the Water by the Operation of an Angel, was effectual only to the curing of one Perſon at one Time, was to evince the Miraculouſneſs of the Cure. Had many been cured at once, the Sceptick might have imputed their Cures to the natural Virtue of the Water, and, upon this Suppoſition, been imboldened to ask, "Where is "the Wonder of this? Do not many medicinal "Baths cure various Kinds of Diſeaſes, and "Multitudes of ſuch as labour under each Diſ-

"eaſe,

" eaſe, provided their Cure be curable? Had one " only indeed been cured, the firſt, that could " get in after the Troubling of the Water, there " would have been then a great and real Miracle? " But now the Numbers make the Fact *ſuſpicious*. " To make it appear a Miracle, indeed, its Ef- " fects ſhould have been confined and limited to " particular Times and Perſons, and otherwiſe ſo " circumſtantiated, as that the Power of God, and " not of blind Nature, might have been appa- " rent in it." But all this Language is effectually ſilenced by the Method, which the wiſe Providence of God took in this Caſe, and the Miracle eſtabliſhed upon ſuch evident Conviction, as the Mouth of Infidelity itſelf cannot gainſay.

That the Widow of *Naim*'s Son, and the Ruler of the Synagogue's Daughter, were both of them really dead, is evident from the Senſe of all that were about them, who were actually carrying the one to his Burial, and making Preparation for the Funeral of the other; ſo that had not our bleſſed Saviour been confident of the divine Virtue reſiding in him, whereby he was able to recover them to Life again, it would have been Madneſs in him to have attempted to do it.

" He might ſuppoſe, perhaps, that there was " a Miſtake in the People, that were about them, " and that theſe two young Perſons might poſ- " ſibly be in a lethargick State." But, beſides the Folly of preſuming upon a Thing, which ſcarce happens once in a Century, how could he tell, that upon his touching the Bier of the one, or the Hand of the other, and calling upon them, they would inſtantly awake? And if they did not awake at his Call, his whole Pretenſions of being a Prophet ſent from God, with a Power to reſtore

Life

Life to the Dead, muſt as effectually have been dead. But now, if we examine a little more into our Lord's Conduct, in both theſe Caſes, we ſhall find that he acted, not upon any Suppoſition of Miſtake in the Peopls, but out *of the Fullneſs of the Godhead that dwelt in him bodily*. He, coming to the City of *Naim*, attended with his Diſciples, meets at the Gate, the Funeral of a certain young Man, *the only Son of a Woman, that was a Widow*. The Conſideration of her deſtitute Condition moved his Compaſſion, indeed; but, for all that, he might have let the Funeral paſs. None of the Company either asked or challenged him to raiſe the dead Youth: It was intirely his own Offer; and an Offer that no wiſe Man, who ſet up for a Prophet, would have ever made, had he not been conſcious (as we find he was) that he was able to perform it.

While he was at *Capernaum*, a Perſon of ſome Note requeſts of him to go and heal his Daughter, who was at the Point of Death. Before he could get to the Houſe, a Meſſenger comes and acquaints the Father that ſhe was actually dead. Here our Lord had a fair Opportunity to excuſe himſelf; for, tho' he might pretend to cure Diſeaſes (which was all that *Jairus* requeſted of him) yet it did not therefore follow, that he was to raiſe the Dead. But, inſtead of retracting, he offers, of his own Accord, to go forward, and tells the Father (as he afterwards did) that he would raiſe her to Life again. *Be not afraid, only believe*, ſays he, *and ſhe ſhall be made whole*; which he could never have ſaid, from any other Principle than a Conſciouſneſs of that *almighty Power, whereby he is able to ſubdue all Things to himſelf*, Phil. iii. 21.

But,

But, tho' our Lord was conſcious of his divine Power, yet, upon his coming to the Ruler's Houſe, inſtead of making any oſtentatious Boaſt of it, we find him, by the Modeſty of his Expreſſion, the *Maid is not dead, but ſleepeth*, endeavouring to conceal it. It is in a great Meaſure, indeed, owing to his Modeſty and great Humility, that inſtead of proclaiming, he requires the People ſo frequently to ſuppreſs the Fame of his marvellous Works: But, in the preſent Caſe, he might have ſome Regard to the Character of *Jairus*, as Ruler of the *Synagogue*, and, by this Advice of Silence, diſpenſing with his ſpeaking publickly of a Miracle, which might poſſibly draw the Malice of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, upon him, as well as upon himſelf. In the Caſe of his raiſing *Lazarus*, we find that, *becauſe, by Reaſon of him, many of the* Jews *went away and believed on* Jeſus, *the chief Prieſts conſulted*, not only how to deſtroy *Jeſus*, but to put *Lazarus* likewiſe to *Death*: And much the ſame Deſign might have been ſuſpected (which our Saviour, by this kind Caution, endeavoured to prevent) if it once came to their Knowledge, that ſo great a Man, as a Governor of the *Synagogue*, by the miraculous Recovery of his Daughter, had forſaken the Religion of his Anceſtors, and was become a Convert to the *Chriſtian* Faith.

Gadara was one of the Cities beyond *Jordan*, belonging to the Country called *Decapolis*, which was ſometimes in the Hands of the *Jews*, and ſometimes of the *Syrians*; but at this Time was inhabited by both. The *Syrians* were *Heathens*, and conſequently made uſe of Swine, not only for Food, but for Sacrifices likewiſe: And 'tis not improbable, that the *Jews* of the Country might

be tempted to feed Swine, by the Advantage they made in ſelling them to their Heathen Neighbours. This was againſt a Prohibition of their Law, 'tis true; but Laws, we know, are not always obſerved, and perhaps leaſt of all at *Gadara*, which being in the Extremity of the *Jewiſh* Territories, and under the Juriſdiction of *Heathens*, left the *Jews* without any Reſtraint upon them, but that of *Conſcience*, which is too frequently violated for the Sake of *Gain*.

To bring the Matter then to a narrow Compaſs. The Swine, which were deſtroyed, in Conſequence of the *Permiſſion*, which our *Saviour* gave the evil Spirits to enter into them, belonging either to the *Jews* or *Gentiles* of *Gadara*: If they belonged to the *Jews*, it cannot be denied, but they were juſtly puniſhed for breaking their own Laws and Conſtitutions, which forbad them to keep any; nor can our Saviour's Right of inflicting the Puniſhment be called in Queſtion, becauſe it was a received Maxim among the *Jews*, that any Perſon inveſted with the Character of a Prophet, and acting by the Spirit of God, might, without the Aſſiſtance of a Magiſtrate, put the Laws in Execution againſt Offenders: And therefore we, who acknowledge our *Jeſus* to have been *more than a Prophet*, can never be at a Loſs to account for his exerciſing an Authority among the *Jews*, which (according to their Confeſſion) was allowable in the loweſt of that Order. But if the Heathens of *Gadara* were the Owners of theſe Swine, our Saviour might be induced to permit the Devils to enter into them, not only to teach them the Sacredneſs of the *Jewiſh* Laws, which they, on Account of the Prohibition of Swines Fleſh

Fleſh, may be ſuppoſed to have ridiculed; but to cure them likewiſe of their idolatrous Worſhip of *Demons*, and to engage them to embrace the *Chriſtian* Faith. For when they ſaw our Lord's Power over ſuch a Multitude of Devils, exhibited in their Poſſeſſion of ſuch a Number of Swine, (had they made a right Application of the Miracle) they could not but perceive the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine, and the Madneſs of their worſhipping ſuch impure Spirits, as were both caſt out of the Men, at his Command, and could not enter into the Swine, without his Permiſſion.

They could not but perceive, I ſay, that our Saviour was a Prophet ſent from Heaven, that what he did was by a Commiſſion from God, and conſequently that he could not be guilty of any Injuſtice in the Deſtruction of the Swine, which, upon this Suppoſition, was not his Act, but the Act of Providence. He, indeed, as a Man, had no Right to deſtroy the People's Swine, but God, who is the ſupreme Proprietor of the whole Earth, moſt certainly had; and ſhall we then complain of him for ſuch a Puniſhment as this, when every Day we ſee more ſurprizing Inſtances before our Eyes? When we ſee him laying whole Nations waſte with Peſtilence, with Famine, and with Earthquakes, ſhall we confeſs his ſovereign Authority in theſe Caſes, and yet, upon the Loſs of two thouſand Swine, cry out and ſay, *Why haſt thou done this?* The Heathens themſelves (upon the Suppoſition of a Providence) will acknowledge this to be unreaſonable; nor can our Saviour (as acting by a divine Commiſſion) ever be juſtly blamed, becauſe he once or twice did the ſame Thing which God does every Day.

But, after all, whether the Proprietors were *Jews* or *Gentiles*, the Words in the Text do not imply, that our Saviour was either principal or acceſſory to the Deſtruction of the Swine. St. *Mark* indeed, tells us, that *he gave the Devils Leave*; and St. *Luke*, that *he ſuffered them* to enter into the Swine; but by this is meant no more, than that he did not prevent them; that he did not interpoſe his divine Power, in order to hinder them from entering; but if this made our Saviour a Sharer in the Deſtruction of the Swine, by Parity of Reaſon, it will make God (becauſe he permits it) anſwerable for all the Evil that is done under the Sun. Thus whether we ſuppoſe the *Jews* or *Heathens* Owners of the Herd of Swine, our Saviour's permitting the Devils to enter into them, made him not acceſſory to their Deſtruction; or, if it be ſaid, that he did it with a punitive Intent, it was either to make the *Jews* ſuffer for the Breach of their Law, or the *Heathens* for their obſtinate Idolatry; which his Character of a Prophet, and the Teſtimony of his being *the Son of the Moſt high*, without all Controverſy, authorized him to do.

To know the true End and Deſign of our Saviour's Transfiguration, it may not be improper to look a little into the Context, where we find that after *Peter*'s confeſſing him to be *the* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God, from that Time began he to ſhew unto his Diſciples, how that he muſt go unto* Jeruſalem, *and ſuffer many Things of the Elders, and chief Prieſts and* Scribes, *and be killed, and be raiſed again the third Day.* Nor was this all, for he foretold them, that they likewiſe were to ſuffer many grievous Perſecutions for his *Name*'s *Sake*; and therefore

therefore he recommended to them the unpleaſant Doctrines of *Self-denial, and taking up the Croſs and following him*, with this great, though diſtant Encouragement, that *When the Son of Man ſhould come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels, he ſhould then reward every one according to his Works*, Matt. xvi. 27.

Theſe Predictions, Doctrines, and Promiſes were ſo contrary to the Expectation of his Diſciples, who hoped in him to have a temporal Prince and Deliverer, a Reſtorer of the decayed State of *Iſrael*, and Promoter of themſelves to great Honours and Employments, that our Saviour thought proper, (not many Days after) in order to revive their Faith and Truſt in him, and to fortify their Minds againſt what was likely to enſue, to take as many with him into the Mount, as made up a legal Evidence, and there to give them an ocular Conviction of what he had promiſed, in Recompence of what they were to ſuffer, by aſſuming for a while, the Luſtre and Appearance of a glorified Body; which ſo raiſed their drooping Hearts, that we find St. *Peter* immediately declaring, *Lord, it is good for us to be here, and if thou wilt, let us make here three Tabernacles, one for thee, and one for* Moſes, *and one for* Elias. For the Deſign of theſe Words is, not only to ſecure his Maſter, by ſtaying in that Retreat, from the Sufferings and Death, which would be the Conſequence of his going up to *Jeruſalem*, (as St. *Chryſoſtom* and others underſtand it) but to expreſs likewiſe the Pleaſure and Satisfaction he took in this Tranſfiguration, and glorified Company; and how he reſumed freſh Spirits and Comfort, from a Miracle which was emblematical of the glorious State, not of

Chriſt only, but of all good Chriſtians after their Reſurrection.

The only Inſtance we have in Scripture of any Transfiguration like unto this, is in the Caſe of *Moſes*, after he had been forty Days and forty Nights with God on Mount *Sinai*; for, upon this Deſcent, we are told, that the Skin of his Face ſo ſhone, that the Children of *Iſrael* were afraid to come nigh him, and therefore he put a Veil on his Face, while he talked with them. That our bleſſed Lord, in the Act of his Tranfiguration, might probably have reſpect to this preceding one of *Moſes*, and both in the Nature of the Change, and the Place where 'twas wrought, deſign ſome Conformity thereunto, is what we are at Liberty to ſuppoſe; and conſequently can account why the Scene of this Tranſaction was in a Mountain, rather than a Valley: And why the three Apoſtles, *Peter*, *James* and *John*, and not the whole Multitude, were allowed to be Spectators of it, we have ſeveral Reaſons to alledge.

For beſides, this was a Vouchſafement, fit only to be communicated to ſuch as were of his more immediate Confidence, and ſtood in the higheſt Degree of his Eſteem; to ſuch, as for their Zeal and Affection to him, were honoured and diſtinguiſhed with a peculiar Title, and after his Reſurrection, appointed by Providence to be the great Pillars of his Church; and beſides that, it would have looked like Vanity and Oſtentation in him, to have taken the Multitude into the Mount, and there made a publick Sight of his Miracles, which was the Thing he always carefully declined: Beſides this, I ſay, there ſeems to be ſomething in the Transfiguration itſelf, which might have been of

dangerous

dangerous Conſequence for the Multitude to have been admitted to.

St. *Peter*, who himſelf was one of thoſe who were with him on the holy Mount, gives us this Account of it. *We have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables*, ſays he, *when we made known unto you the Coming of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *but were Eye-witneſſes of* his Majeſty; *for he received from God the Father, Honour and Glory, when there came ſuch a Voice to him from the* excellent Glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* Now, by his *Majeſty*, in this Place, moſt properly is to be underſtood that Luſtre and Radiancy, wherein he appeared, when his *Face ſhone as the Sun, and his Garments* (pierced through with the Beams that were darted from his Body) *became as white as Light*: For to *ſhine as the Sun*, is a Phraſe expreſſing ſomething belonging to celeſtial Majeſty; and white and ſplendid Garments are proper for Kings and royal Miniſters of the heavenly Court. And, in like Manner, by the excellent Glory, from whence the Voice proceeded, can be meant nothing but the bright and ſhining Cloud that then appeared, which the *Jews* call the *Shechinah*, and is made up (as moſt imagine) of an Hoſt of Angels, the conſtant Symbol of the divine Preſence; and how great and magnificent this Symbol is, we may in ſome Meaſure learn from the Viſion of the Prophet *Daniel*. *The Antient of Days did ſit, whoſe Garment was white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like pure Wool: His Throne was like the fiery Flames, and his Wheels as burning Fire: A fiery Stream had Iſſue from before him; thouſand of thouſands miniſtered unto him, and ten thouſand Times ten thouſand ſtood before him.*

Suppoſing

Suppoſing then that this was the Manner of our Saviour's Transfiguration, that not only in his own Perſon he was arrayed with all this Glory and Luſtre, but had likewiſe an angelic Hoſt ſurrounding him, two of the greateſt Prophets of antient Ages attending him, and a Voice from Heaven, declaring him to be *the well-beloved Son of God:* while the Multitude ſtood by, and ſaw and heard all this, it would have been almoſt unavoidable, but that, upon ſuch Conviction of his being the *Meſſiah*, they would have taken him by Force, and made him a King. But ſince (as our Saviour tells us) his Kingdom was not of this World, nor to come with the Pomp and Obſervation which the *Jews* expected; and ſince one of his great Concerns was, that no Diſturbance of the Civil Government ſhould be occaſioned by him, or laid to his Charge, he wiſely made choice of three only, (but theſe the principal of his Apoſtles) to whom he exhibited a Specimen of his future Glory; which had he done to the Multitude, it might probably have occaſioned a general Inſurrection; and, as he came down from the Mount, he charged them, *That they ſhould tell the Viſion to no Man, till after his Reſurrection.*

And from the Word *Orama*, which we render *Viſion*, ſome have ſuppoſed, that *Moſes* and *Elias* were not there in their proper Perſons, but that the Apoſtles, in their Fancy and Imagination, had only a ſtrong Idea or Impreſſion of them; or at moſt, that their Spectres, or ſome ſhadowy Reſemblances of them only were there. Since the *Evangeliſts*, however, ſpeak of them in a perſonal Character and Capacity; ſince they repreſent them, as *talking with* Chriſt, *and ſpeaking of his Deceaſe, which*

which he was to accompliſh at Jeruſalem; ſince they tell us, that when they were come out of the Extaſy, into which this Viſion had caſt them, they ſaw two Men ſtanding with him; it is much more probable to think, that *Moſes* and *Elias* were really there, and that God had, ſomewhere or other, from the Time of their Departure out of this World, preſerved both their Bodies to this End. The Scriptures, indeed, are expreſs as to *Elias*, that he was tranſlated *into Heaven*, by the Miniſtry of Angels reſembling *a chariot of Fire, and Horſes of Fire*; and it is a pretty general Opinion, both among *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Authors, taken, as is ſuppoſed, from ſome apocryphal Book, that *Moſes* did not die, but was tranſlated into Heaven, or ſome terreſtrial Paradiſe, in the ſame Manner as were *Enoch* and *Elias*. There is a Paſſage in St. *Jude*, where *Michael* the Archangel is ſaid to contend with the Devil, and diſpute about the Body of *Moſes*, which (if taken in a literal Senſe) will greatly favour this Opinion; for if we can but ſuppoſe that the Conteſt between this good and evil Angel, concerning *Moſes*'s Body, related not to its Burial, (as ſome will have it) but its Aſſumption into Heaven, or ſome other Place of Happineſs, which the *Devil* might oppoſe, and urge the Obligation of his dying the common Death of all Men, for this Reaſon, more eſpecially, becauſe he had once taken away the Life of an *Egyptian*: If we can but ſuppoſe, I ſay, that the Conteſt aroſe upon this Subject, then may we eaſily conceive, both how *Moſes* might ſubſiſt in a ſeparate State, from the Time of his Aſſumption; and how he, together with *Elias*, might be diſpatched from thence upon this Occaſion, to ſet off the Luſtre of our Lord's Transfiguration, by

by their appearing, at the ſame Time, in their reſplendent Robes of Glory.

And, indeed, if this was the Purpoſe of their Errand, what Subject can we ſuppoſe ſo proper, and ſo well becoming the Converſation of three ſuch illuſtrious Perſons, as the Redemption of Mankind by the Death and Paſſion of the Son of God. What theſe two antient Prophets had in their Times, imperfectly revealed; nay, what the Angels of Heaven deſired at all Times to look into, *viz.* the Harmony of the divine Attributes in this ſtupendous Work, *The Depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God,* Rom. xi. 33. *and the Breadth and Length, and Depth, and Height of the Love of* Chriſt, *which paſſeth Knowledge,* Eph. iii. 18, 19. *Myſteries, which have been hid from Ages and from Generations, but are now made manifeſt to the Saints,* Col. i 26. Theſe were the ſublime Subjects (for theſe are implied in their ſpeaking of *Chriſt*'s Deceaſe) of their Converſation at this Interview; and, in Compariſon of theſe, how jejune and worthleſs are all the wiſe Sayings of Philoſophers, or Compoſitions of human Wit? With good Reaſon therefore, might the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles,* (who himſelf was no mean Proficient in what the World falſely calls Knowledge) inſtead of the *Excellence of Speech and Wiſdom, determine to know nothing* among his *Corinthians, but* Jeſus Chriſt, *and him crucified,* 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2. For *we preach* Chriſt *crucified,* ſays he, *unto the* Jews *a Stumbling-block, and unto the* Greeks *Fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both* Jews *and* Greeks, Chriſt *the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God,* Chap. i. Ver. 23. *For of God he is made unto us Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification and Redemption,* Ver. 30.

The

The Scriptures, upon all Occaſions, acquaint us, that the *Baptiſt*, through the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, had borne conſtant and ample Teſtimony to our Saviour's divine Miſſion; that he exhorted thoſe who came to him, to reſt their Faith, not on himſelf but on him that ſhould come after him; and that, as ſoon as he was acquainted who he was, by a viſible Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and a Voice from Heaven, he made it his Buſineſs to diſpoſe the *Jews* in general, and his own Diſciples in particular, to receive and reverence him, by teſtifying every where, that he was the *Son of God* the *Lamb of God, who came from above*, and *ſpake the Words of God*, and *to whom God had not given the Spirit by Meaſure*. And yet, after all this, ſome are of Opinion, that the *Baptiſt* might have the ſame Conception of *Chriſt*'s temporal Kingdom, that the reſt of the *Jewiſh* Nation had; and that his long and irkſome Impriſonment might by this Time have tempted him to doubt, whether he, who by Birth was his Relation, and from whoſe Aſſiſtance, very probably, he expected a Deliverance, was in Reality the *Meſſiah*. It ſeems, however, not a little injurious to the Character of the *Baptiſt*, to ſuppoſe either his Conſtancy ſo ſhaking, or his Behaviour ſo inconſiſtent with itſelf, as, after ſuch open and ſolemn Declarations, to admit of any Doubt, whether our *Lord were he that ſhould come*, i. e. the long promiſed, and univerſally expected *Meſſiah*. And therefore, the ſafeſt Way is, to conclude that he did not ſend this Meſſage, with a Deſign to ſatisfy any Scruples of his own, but purely for the Sake and Conviction of his Diſciples, who brought it; to ſet them right in their Notions, and confirm them in the Belief of *Jeſus*, and ſo turn them over to

their proper and better Maſter, now that himſelf was upon the Point of leaving the World. And this was the rather neceſſary, becauſe their immoderate Zeal and partial Reſpect for the *Baptiſt* had hitherto made them averſe to *Jeſus*, and envious at his Honour and Miracles. What *John* had diſcourſed to them formerly upon this Subject had made but little Impreſſion upon them; and therefore, in Compaſſion to their Infirmities, he condeſcended to have their *Scruples* propounded in his own Name: And our Saviour's Method of reſolving them (which was by ſhewing them the Miracles which he wrought, were the ſame in Kind that the *Meſſiah* was to do) was ſo very ſatisfactory, that when their former Maſter was gone, they repaired to him with the melancholy News of his Death, and (according to the received Tradition) for ever after became his conſtant Diſciples.

There are three other Opinions which have their Followers among the Antients. One is mentioned by the Author of the Queſtions that go under the Name of *Juſtin Martyr*, viz. That the *Baptiſt* was not in the leaſt doubtful, whether *Jeſus* was the true *Meſſiah*, but only was deſirous to know, whether he, of whom he had heard ſo many wonderful Things (whilſt under Confinement, and unable to ſatisfy himſelf) was the ſame Perſon of whom he had given Teſtimony, and declared to be the *Meſſiah*. Others think, that the Meaning of the Queſtion was, *Whether* Jeſus *ſhould die for the Redemption of Mankind?* But ſurely he, who long before had ſtiled him the *Lamb of God, that takes away the Sins of the World*, John i. 29. with Alluſion, no doubt, to the Sacrifices ſlain under the *Jewiſh* Law, gave ſufficient Intimation, that he was not ignorant of this great Truth.

Others

Others again imagine, that the Senſe of this Enquiry is, Whether *Jeſus* ſhould come to the *Hades*, or Place of Souls departed, (whither the *Baptiſt* foreknew that himſelf was ſhortly to go) and whether he ſhould preach his Coming, and be his *Forerunner* there, in the like Manner, as he had been upon Earth. But this is an Imagination, too extravagant to receive any Countenance from the preſent, whatever it might meet with in former Ages.

The frequent Uſe of Parables and Emblems, in the Diſcourſes and Writings of the oriental Sages, and eſpecially of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, is ſo very well known, that a Man muſt diſcover his Ignorance, who pretends to aſſert, that our bleſſed Saviour attempted any Innovation, when he firſt began to inſtruct the People in a parabolical Way, ſince ſeveral of his Diſcourſes of this kind, particularly that of the rick Glutton, and of the fooliſh Virgins, are acknowledged to be borrowed from the Writing of the *Rabbins*.

The *Jews*, above all Nations, delighted in this Way of Reaſoning. Their Books, at this Day, are full of ſuch Parables as our Saviour uſed, and are generally introduced in a Form of Speech, not unlike his; *Whereunto ſhall I liken ſuch or* ſuch *a Thing?* Nay, in the *Talmudical* Treatiſes, ſuch as the Treatiſe *Killaim*, there is a Diſpute *of ſowing upon the Rocks and Stones*, and of *mixing Wheat and Tares together*; and in *Peah* (a Tract in the *Jeruſalem Talmud*) there is mention made of a *Tree of Muſtard-Seed, which one might climb up into*, like other Trees. So that our Saviour was by no means to blame, but highly to be commended, for purſuing this parabolical Way of teaching Morality, which

was the moſt celebrated Method among the *Jews*. For his farther Vindication, however, ſome have obſerved, that what our Saviour delivered in this Manner, did not contain the fundamental Precepts and Doctrines of the Goſpel (for theſe were taught with ſufficient Clearneſs in the fifth, ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of St. *Matthew*) but only the Myſteries relating to the Progreſs of the Goſpel, and the Event of it among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and the *Jews* themſelves acknowledge, that the Predictions of this Nature were uſually taught in allegorical and emblematical Expreſſions, being not ſo neceſſary to be known, as were the fundamental Rules of Faith and Manners.

The Truth is, the *Eaſtern* Way of Reaſoning was ſo different from that of the *Weſtern*, that the ſoundeſt Philoſophy of *Greece* or *Rome* would have been mere Jargon and Cant at *Jeruſalem*. The only Method of reaſoning which was agreeable to the *Jewiſh* Taſte, was to uſher in an handſome Simile or Story, oppoſite to the Matter in Hand; to apply a ſmart Saying of ſome antient Worthy, or to bring good Proof from their Law or antient Tradition; but to go to prove Morality to them (as *Plato* or *Tully* do) from the eternal Rules of Juſtice, from the Rectitude and Honourableneſs of Virtue, and the Pravity and Turpitude of Vice, would have been ſuch a Way of talking, as the wiſeſt Men of their Way of Education would have greatly deſpiſed; and therefore our bleſſed Saviour, (who was well acquainted with the Temper and Cuſtoms of the People, with whom he converſed) took care that his Way of inſtructing them ſhould be ſuch, as was moſt agreeable to their Education, and conſequently

ſuch

ſuch as would tend more to their Edification, than if he had introduced the philoſophic Method of Morality, which was only in uſe in ſuch Nations, as were deſtitute of the Benefits of a divine Revelation.

The *Heathens* indeed couched their religious Myſteries under Fables and Allegories, out of a Principle both of Fear and Policy, to conceal them from the Contempt of the Vulgar, and to excite the Study and Curioſity of the Learned: But in this latter Deſign they ſeem to be miſtaken, becauſe the Learned could no ſooner look into the Matters hid under theſe Fables, but they muſt have diſcovered their Shame, Abſurdity, and Ridiculouſneſs. The Deſign of our Lord's ſpeaking to the People in Parables was quite contrary to this, as himſelf declares, *viz. Becauſe they ſeeing ſee not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they underſtand*; which Words, both in ſacred and profane Authors, are a proverbial Expreſſion, concerning Men ſo wicked and ſo ſlothful, that either they attend not to, or will not follow the cleareſt Intimations, and Convictions of their Duty; and therefore, to awaken their Attention, and make the ſtronger Impreſſion upon them, our Saviour was forced to have Recourſe to Parables.

This Paſſage indeed, in the other *Evangeliſts*, that mention it, ſeems to bear a different Senſe, *unto them that are without, all theſe Things are done in Parables, that ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not underſtand:* Or, as it is in St. *Luke, that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand:* As if our Lord had ſpoken to the Multitudes in Parables, *i. e.* in a plain and familiar Way, on ſuppoſe

purpoſe that they might not underſtand him; which, beſides the Contradiction, ſeems to include a Spice of Malevolence, where there never was any. But all this is occaſioned by the Miſtake of our Tranſlators, who both in St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*, have rendered the *Greek* Word *ina*, by *that*, which ſhould have been *becauſe*; for this gives the Words a quite different Turn: In St. *Mark*, *becauſe ſeeing they do ſee, and not perceive*; and, in St. *Luke*, *becauſe ſeeing they ſee not, and hearing they underſtand not.* The natural Import of which is this,——That the *Jews*, by reaſon of their Prejudices, not being able to underſtand the great Myſteries of the Goſpel, our Saviour, out of Love to their Souls, accommodated himſelf to their Capacities, by ſpeaking to them in Parables, *i. e.* in Metaphors and Similitudes, borrowed from Things temporal and corporeal, in order to bring them to a more competent Underſtanding of his Doctrine.

To you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but not to them, does not therefore imply, that our Saviour's Parables were dark and obſcure; and that, by ſpeaking to the People in this Manner, he had a Deſign to conceal any Truth that was requiſite for them to know; but only, that he made a fuller Diſcovery of his Doctrine to his Diſciples, than it was neceſſary, at that Time, to make to the Multitude; that he inſtructed them in Private, and inlarged upon the Senſe of his Parables, and let them into the Knowledge of ſeveral Things that were not yet proper to be communicated to *all*, becauſe they were his peculiar Friends, and his conſtant Companions; were more diſpoſed to receive his Doctrine

rine; were afterwards to be the Preachers of it; and, at length, to ſeal the Truth of it with their Blood.

They were honeſt and well-deſigning Men; but it would be paying too great a Complement to their Underſtanding, to ſay, that there was any Thing extraordinary (until they were endued from above) in their Sagacity and Penetration: And therefore we are not to impute it to the Obſcurity of our Saviour's Parables, that we find his Diſciples ſo frequently at a Loſs for the meaning of them (ſince ſome of them were quoted from *Jewiſh* Authors, and many of them taken from the moſt obvious and common Things) but we ſhould rather impute it to their natural Dullneſs and want of Apprehenſion, as we find our Saviour himſelf does, when, upon their requeſting him to expound the plain Parable of the *Sower*, he could not forbear ſaying with Admiration, *Know ye not this Parable, and how then ſhall ye know all Parables?*

It was not then to cloud and obſcure, but rather illuſtrate and inforce his Meaning, that our Lord delivered himſelf ſo frequently in Parables; and the Reaſon why he refuſed to gratify the *Phariſees* in their Deſire of a *Sign from Heaven*, was, becauſe he had already done Miracles enough to ſatisfy them, had not their Obſtinacy been Proof againſt all Conviction. In that very Chapter, wherein they make this inſolent Demand, they had ſeen, before their Faces, a withered Hand made whole; and, upon the Ejection of a Devil, a blind and dumb Man reſtored to his Sight and Speech; but, obſerve the Turn, which their reſolute Infidelity gives to the Miracles: *This Fellow does not caſt out Devils, but by* Beelzebub, *the Prince of the Devils:* And yet theſe very Men have the Modeſty, in a few Verſes after, to come to the Perſon, they had

had, juſt before, reviled and blaſphemed at this rate, with this arrogant Demand, *Maſter, we would ſee a Sign from thee.* After ſuch an Affront, would it have become the meekeſt Man upon Earth, to gratify theſe Men in any Requeſt whatever? But much more, would it have become the Majeſty of the Son of God, to proſtitute his diſine Power, merely to ſatisfy the Curioſity (for that was all they wanted to have ſatisfied) of ſuch abandoned Miſcreants?

The Sign, which they wanted to ſee, may be ſuppoſed to be, either ſuch a Shower of Manna, as *Moſes*; or ſuch a Clap of Thunder, as *Samuel*; or ſuch a Fall of Fire, as *Elijah*; or ſuch an Arreſt of the Sun, as *Joſhua* once called for. Now, ſuppoſing that our Saviour had been flexible enough to humour them in their unreaſonable Requeſt, what Reaſon have we to think, that theſe aerial or celeſtial Prodigies would have wrought in them any more Coviction, than thoſe Miracles, which were inconteſtable, done in their Preſence, within their Feeling, and Compaſs of Examination? Theſe, we ſee, they imputed to a diabolical Power, and much more might they do it to thoſe, that were at ſo vaſt a Diſtance, ſince they could not be ignorant of what is ſaid of the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, in the Book of *Job*, *viz.* that the *Fire, which fell from Heaven*, and conſumed that holy Man's Subſtance, as well as the *Wind*, which overturned the Houſe, where his Children were met together, were the Effects of Satan's procuring.

What Notions the ancient *Jews* had of the Power of Magick, we cannot poſitively ſay; but it is certain, that the *Heathen* Magicians made it their Boaſt, that they could ſtop the Courſe of the Sun, Moon,

Moon, and Stars, turn them into Darkneſs as they pleaſed, and make them obey their Voice: And if the *Phariſees* had the like Notions of theſe Things, their demanding a *Sign from Heaven* was to no manner of Purpoſe; becauſe, upon their own Suppoſition, that our Lord acted by a magical Power, what they deſired him to do was not above the Sphere of his Ability; and if they thought it ſo, it could never have been uſed to work in them any good Conviction; becauſe the ſame Hardneſs of Heart, and Hatred of him, would have kept them under the ſame Perſuaſion ſtill, that all his Wonders, whether above or below, whether in Heaven or on Earth, whether on human or celeſtial Bodies, were done by the Aſſiſtance of the Devil.

Since then no Sign, that the *Phariſees* could ask (even had our Saviour condeſcended to work it) would have been effectual to their Conviction, our Saviour was not unkind in remitting them to one, that would not fail of convincing them, that what he did was not by a diabolical, but divine Power. For ſince it was agreed on all Hands, that a Perſon, when dead, (whatever he had in his Lifetime) could not then have the Devil at his Command; if, after they had crucified him, they ſhould find him reſtored to Life again, this would be a Sign, wherein there could be no Fallacy, that, as his Reſtoration was from the Hand of God, ſo his Commiſſion had all along been from the ſame; and that, as *Jonas*'s miraculous Eſcape from the Whale's Belly (wherewith the *Ninevites* were doubtleſs acquainted) was a powerful Means to confirm to them the Truth of his prophetick Office; ſo now, though all his Miracles, while alive,

having prevailed but little, yet, after his Death, and Reſurrection from the Grave, he would be credited in the ſame manner as *Jonas* was, *he would then draw all Men after him*; and the very *Phariſees* themſelves would be prevailed upon to acknowledge his divine Miſſion. This is the Senſe of his comparing himſelf ſo often with the Prophet *Jonas*; and that the Chief-prieſts and *Phariſees* underſtood the Compariſon in this Senſe, is manifeſt from what they ſay to *Pilate, Sir, we remember that that Deceiver ſaid, while he was yet alive, After three Days I will riſe again*; for I no-where remember, that he made any Declaration to the Chief-prieſts and *Phariſees* (tho' he did it frequently to his Apoſtles) of his intended Reſurrection after three Days, but only in this Compariſon of himſelf to *Jonas*.

Had human Wiſdom indeed been conſulted in the Election of *Chriſt*'s Apoſtles, it would have made choice of the profoundeſt Rabbins, the acuteſt Philoſophers, and the moſt powerful Orators, who, by the Strength of Reaſon, and Arts of Eloquence, might have triumphed over the Minds of Men, grappled with the Stubbornneſs of the *Jews*, and baffled the fine Notions and Speculations of the *Greeks* and *Romans*; but then it muſt be allowed, that one Argument for the Proof of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Religion had been loſt. Nay, it might have been objected, "That no Wonder in-"deed, that this Religion ſhould thrive ſo well in "the World, when it had all human Advantages "to aſſiſt it, and was ſupported, and carried on "by the united Force of the Reaſon and Eloquence "of ſuch renowned Scholars." But now, by making choice of weak and illiterate Perſons, to be his Apoſtles and firſt Publiſhers of the Goſpel,

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our Lord has taken an effectual Means, that *our Faith ſhould not ſtand* (as St. *Paul* expreſſes it) *in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God*, becauſe *their Speech and their Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom, but in the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power.*

And indeed, what leſs than a divine Power could have enabled a few Mechanicks, who had no Art or Addreſs of their own, to propagate a new and unheard of Religion, contrary to the Laws every where eſtabliſhed, and contrary to Mens natural Paſſions and Appetites, with ſuch a wonderful Succeſs, as, in the Space of twenty or thirty Years, to extend it over all the principal Parts of the *Roman* Empire; and, in the next Age, to fill all Places, Cities and Iſlands, Caſtles and Boroughs, Palaces and Senates, Courts and Camps, with Multitudes of Converts, as the great Apologiſt, *Tertullian*, juſtly glories? Doubtleſs, if ever there was an Intervention of divine Power in human Affairs, it was here, *when God choſe the fooliſh and weak Things of the World to confound the Wiſe and Mighty*, and when Simplicity and Ignorance not only had the Advantage, but abſolutely triumphed over all the Wit and Learning, and Power and Policy of the World.

That therefore the mighty Force of Chriſtianity, to make its Way through the greateſt Obſtacles, might more evidently appear, the Inſtruments, which our Saviour employ'd in the Propagation of it (ſo far as their own Abilities, either natural or required, were concerned) were the meaneſt that can be imagined; but, by an extraordinary Communication of his bleſſed Spirit to them, he inſpired them with the Gift of Languages, that they might be able to addreſs themſelves to People of

all Nations; with the Power of working Miracles, that they might be able to confirm the Truth of the Doctrine which they taught; and, upon all Emergencies, *with such a Mouth and Wisdom, as all their Adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist.*

These and several other Gifts extraordinary did more than supply the natural Defects which the Apostles laboured under, in the Execution of so great a Work; but now, that these Gifts are withdrawn, our Religion established, and the Canon of the holy Scriptures compleated, their Successors have a different Province to manage. Instead of travelling all the World over, and compassing Sea and Land to gain Proselytes to the Christian Faith, their Duty is, to *keep in Order* the Things that are settled, and *to feed the Flock of God that is among them, taking the Oversight thereof, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind; not as Lords over God's Inheritance, but as Ensamples to their Flock*; and, instead of delivering to their respective Churches such Writings, as might, in all Ages, be the Pillar and Foundation of Truth, their Business is to study the Scriptures which they have received, to defend their Authority, and expound their Sense; *to preach the Word* (as the Apostle to *Timothy* specifies their Office) *to be instant in Season, out of Season, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine*: and what Compass of Learning and Share of Influence among the People, are requisite to a due Discharge of all this (as *a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of God*) wants no Detail of Arguments to prove, since we find the great Apostle St. *Paul*, amidst all the Gifts that

were

were then diſpenſed to the Church, and the particular Revelations which were vouchſafed him, upon the Conſideration of the Weightineſs of his Office, crying out, and ſaying, *who is ſufficient for theſe Things?* Upon the Whole therefore we may obſerve, that it was highly requiſite, that the Apoſtles, and firſt Publiſhers of the Goſpel, and the preſent Miniſters and Preachers of it, ſhould be Men of different Characters and Abilities; that the former of theſe (for the more effectual Diſcharge of their Office) ſhould have ſeveral kind of Gifts ſupernatural, the latter no more than is the Product of their own Labour and Acquiſition; or (to ſpeak in the Phraſe of the Scripture) that as, at firſt, our *Saviour gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts,* ſo now, he ſhall appoint ſome *Rulers,* ſome *Paſtors,* and ſome *Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of* Chriſt, *till we all come, in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of* Chriſt.

That *Anger*, conſidered in itſelf, and upon all Occaſions whatever, is unlawful, neither the moſt rigid Philoſophers, nor the moſt ſevere Chriſtians have been able to prove. It is one of thoſe Paſſions, that are implanted in us by the God of Nature. The firſt Motions of it ſeem to be mechanical, and the Haſtineſs or Slowneſs of it depends in a great meaſure upon the Temper of the Body, and the animal Spirits: So far then as it is natural, we dare not account it criminal, for fear of making God, who hath implanted it in us, the Author of Sin. Thoſe who define it *a Deſire of Revenge,* or of doing Evil to another, purely be-

cauſe

cauſe he has done ſo to us, make it indeed a ſinful Paſſion, and a plain Violation of that Command, which requires us *not to avenge ourſelves, but rather to give Place unto Wrath*; but if it be conſidered, as proceeding upon a Deſire of obtaining Satisfaction for ſome Injury done to us, or to thoſe for whom we are concerned, the Honour of God, the Reverence due to the Laws, the Love of Virtue, and the Protection of good Men, may make this not only an innocent, but highly neceſſary and commendable. There is a Tameneſs of Spirit, that juſtly deſerves Cenſure; and, in ſome Caſes, we even do not well unleſs we are angry: And for this Reaſon, I make no doubt, it was that our bleſſed Saviour, on ſome Occaſions, ſuffered himſelf to be ſeen in ſome Degrees of this Paſſion; namely, to evince the Lawfulneſs of it, and, by his Example, to confute the Doctrine of thoſe heathen Stoicks, who condemned the Uſe of all Paſſions, and were for making thoſe natural Tendencies, which God has given us, altogether ſuperfluous.

For Religion admits of no ſuch paradoxical Notions: When it requires us to be *ſlow to Wrath*, it allows of the Paſſion upon a juſt Provocation, and only blames him, *who is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe*; and when it gives us this Caution, *Be angry, and ſin not, let not the Son go down upon your Wrath*, it ſuppoſes the Thing itſelf warrantable, and only prohibits the Exceſs or long Duration of it. 'Tis the raſh, cauſeleſs, and continued Anger, that our holy Religion condemns; but who ſhall ſay, that our Saviour's Reſentment to the *Phariſees* was not upon good Grounds, when they, by their Traditions, had made void the moral Law, excuſed Men from doing what God had

commanded, and laid upon them other unneceſſary Burdens, which he had no-where injoined? When the Pride and Arrogance of their Sect, and their Contempt and Hatred of all that contradicted them, made it neceſſary for him to uſe ſome Smartneſs in his Reprehenſions, thereby to excite them to a Senſibility of their Errors? They *had conſulted with the* Herodians *how they might deſtroy him.*

The Works which he did *by the Finger of God*, they had aſcribed to a *diabolical* Power, and therefore no Wonder *that he ſhould look upon them with Indignation, becauſe of the Hardneſs of their Hearts.* But when there was no ſuch Cauſe for any Degree of Anger, and where the Glory of God was not immediately concerned, his whole Life was the moſt perfect Pattern of Meekneſs and Patience, according to that Prediction concerning him, *He ſhall not cry nor lift up, nor cauſe his Voice to be heard in the Streets; a bruiſed Reed ſhall he not break, and a ſmoaking Flax ſhall he not quench.*

But how comes it then, that St. *Mark*, in his *Goſpel*, repreſents our Saviour as a Perſon that was ſuppoſed *to be beſide himſelf?* Various are the Significations which are given to the *Greek* Word *exeſte*, in this Place, but there are three that bid faireſt for the Solution of the Difficulty. In the preceding Verſe it is ſaid, that the Multitude came ſo faſt upon him, that he had not Time to take any Food to recruit his Spirits; and thereupon ſome Interpreters would have the Word ſignify his fainting thro' Hunger, or being in Danger of falling into a *Deliquium* by ſpending his Spirits, and taking no manner of Refreſhment to revive them. Others had rather mean by the Word, ſuch an Extaſy or Tranſport of Mind, as thoſe, who are moved

moved with a vehement Zeal, or prophetick Spirit, are wont to be affected with; and conſequently, that his Friends Apprehenſions were, that, in the Execution of his prophetick Office, *i. e.* in his preaching and inſtructing the People, he expended his Strength too much, forgetful of that Care and Preſervation which he ought to have had of himſelf. But, for my Part, I cannot ſee why the Word may not here be taken in its common and ordinary Senſe; for what is called *Madneſs* and *Diſtraction*. We acknowledge indeed, that our Lord, neither in his Actions or Geſtures, ſhewed ever any Symptoms of a diſordered Mind, nor could his Relations, from any Behaviour of his, conceive any ſuch Thing of him; but then the Words in the Text, *for they ſaid*, may not relate to his Friends, but to other People, who had raiſed this Report of him. The *Phariſees* had given out that he had a Devil, and did all theſe Miracles by a Confederacy with him; and others, who did not run to this Length of Blaſphemy, ſaid nevertheleſs, that he was mad, and his Head turned; and when this came to his Friends Ears, they, out of a charitable Deſign, perhaps, went to apprehend him, ſuppoſing that he might poſſibly be under ſome ſuch Diſorder, and not rightly underſtanding the End of his Miſſion; for ſo the *Evangeliſt* informs us, that ſome of his Kindred *did not believe in him*. And indeed, if we conſider with ourſelves, how common a Thing it is to look upon thoſe, who think, or ſpeak, or act, in a Manner different from other People, as Fools and Madmen; how this was the Fate of *Eliſha*, before *Jehu*'s Companions, and of St. *Paul* before *Feſtus*; we ſhall not think it ſtrange, that our Lord

ſhould

ſhould fall under the ſame opprobrious Imputation, or that his Relations (who had no true Conception of him, or his Office) hearing of this Rumour, ſhould endeavour to get him into their Cuſtody, and ſo prevent his expoſing himſelf to the Scorn and Deriſion of thoſe that hated him. For tho' ſome of the People were of Opinion, that *he ſpake as never Man ſpake, yet many of them ſaid, he has a Devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?*

The Name of *Peter*, or *Cephas* (as it is in the *Syriack*) our bleſſed Lord gave to *Simon*, when his Brother *Andrew* firſt brought them together; and, in Alluſion to this Name it is, that he calls him the *Rock*, or *Stone*, upon which he intended to *build his Church*; ſome indeed by this *Rock* think, that our Saviour intends himſelf, and that, in uttering theſe Words, he pointed at his own Perſon, as he ſeems to have done upon another like Occaſion, when he ſpeaks to the *Jews*, *deſtroy this Temple* (meaning his own Body) *and in three Days I will raiſe it up:* But the Senſe ſeems abſtruſe, and the Tranſition abrupt, that our Saviour, ſpeaking to *Peter*, and calling him a *Rock*, ſhould, with the ſame Breath, paſs to himſelf, and yet not ſay, *upon myſelf*, but *upon this Rock* (and St. *Peter* was the only Rock he mentioned) *will I build my Church:* Others therefore would rather have St. *Peter*'s *Faith* and *Confeſſion* to be the *Rock* here ſpoken of; as it muſt be acknowledged indeed, that, in this Confeſſion of his, the Sum and Subſtance of the Chriſtian Doctrine is compriſed; but then it ſhould be conſidered, that as our Lord, without all doubt, meant to ſay ſomething ſingular to St. *Peter*, as a Reward of his frank Confeſſion of him, if this Confeſſion was

all the *Rock* he intended, here was nothing particular ſaid to the Apoſtle, and yet, at the ſame Time, the whole Grace of the Alluſion to his Name was intirely loſt. It is reaſonable therefore to think, that, as our Saviour here directs his Speech, not to the whole College of the Apoſtles, but to St. *Peter* only, and ſeems to promiſe him ſomething peculiar, as the Reward of his liberal Confeſſion, the Senſe of the Expreſſion ſhould be, That he would, in a more eminent Manner, make uſe of his Miniſtry, in laying the firſt Foundation of the *Chriſtian* Church, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*: As we find he did the former, in his moſt efficacious Sermon at the Day of *Pentecoſt*, and the latter, in the Converſion of *Cornelius* and his Company.

There is a Paſſage in *Iſaiah* which (as ſome imagine) helps us to the Knowledge of what our Saviour means by *the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; 'tis, where God foretels *Eliakim*, that he *will call him and clothe him with the Robe of* Shebna (who was over the Houſhold) *and ſtrengthen him with his Girdle, and commit his Government into his Hand, and lay the Key of the Houſe of* David *upon his Shoulder*, &c.

This Cuſtom of carrying Keys upon Mens Shoulders may ſeem very ſtrange to us; but the Ancients had their Keys made very large, and in the Form of a Sickle, and the Weight and Shape of them was ſuch, that they could no otherwiſe be carried conveniently, but as we ſee our Reapers carry their Sickles.

Now, becauſe the Key was an Enſign of great Honour and Power, and what the chief Stewards in Princes Palaces uſually wore, as an Indication of

of their Office, our Saviour makes uſe of this Expreſſion, to denote that Authority and Juriſdiction wherewith he inveſted the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, in the Adminiſtration of the Affairs of his Church. But beſides the *Key of Government*, there is the *Key of Knowledge*, which the Scribes and *Phariſees* are blamed for having taken away; and therefore, as the Uſe of a Key is to open a Door or Gate, we ſhould rather think the Import of *Chriſt*'s Promiſe here to *Peter* is, that he ſhould be the Perſon, who ſhould firſt open the Myſteries of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, both to *Jew* and *Gentile*, by the Power of his Preaching, make the firſt Converts among both, and, by the Rite of Baptiſm, receive ſuch Converts into the Pale of the Chriſtian Church: And by the *Binding* and *Looſing* which follows (tho' ſome are willing to extend them to the Power of *Excommunication* and *Abſolution*) I ſhould rather be inclined to think, that, according to the Language then in Uſe among the *Jews*, our Saviour means the forbidding or permitting ſuch and ſuch Things; that he is here declaring his Will, that his Apoſtles ſhould ſettle the Affairs of his Church, by Virtue of their infallible Spirit; ſhould determine what was lawful or unlawful for Chriſtians to do, and that ſuch their Determinations ſhould be ratified in Heaven: "*Whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth, i.e.* declare "to be forbidden, ſhall expoſe the Man, that "commits it, to Puniſhment; and *whatſoever thou* "*ſhalt looſe on Earth*, or declare to be lawful now "(tho' formerly forbidden) ſhall be allowed to "be done, without any one's incurring my Diſ-"pleaſure:" So that, in this Senſe, the Words are a Foundation of our Faith and Obedience to the Doctrines and Commands of the Apoſtles, and

of the Ceſſation of the ritual Precepts of the Law of *Moſes*.

According to this Expoſition the Senſe of our Lord's Promiſe to *Peter* (ſuppoſing it perſonal and directed to him only) will be this,——Thy Name ſignifies a *Rock*, and, ſuitable to that Name, ſhall be thy Work and Office; for upon thee, *i. e.* upon the Strength of thy Preaching, ſhall the Foundation of my Church by laid. Thee I will appoint to make the firſt Converts, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to my holy Religion, and, by the Ordinance of Baptiſm, to admit them into the Communion of Saints; and to thee I will give Power to enact Laws, for the good Government of my Church; to determine what is proper or improper to be done, and to releaſe my People from the Obſervation of *legal Ceremonies*.

This is the full Force of Saviour's Speech to *Peter*; and yet it neither denotes, nor implies any oecumenical, paſtoral Power in him (much leſs in his Succeſſors) above the reſt of the Apoſtles. For if he be here called the *Rock*, or *Foundation-ſtone*, the ſame Honour is attributed to the reſt, where it is ſaid, that *we are built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles*, Jeſus Chriſt *himſelf being the chief Corner-ſtone*. If he had the Power of the Keys intruſted with him, and thereby admitted the firſt Converts, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, into the *Chriſtian* Church; both *James* and *John* exerciſed the ſame Office, in converting thoſe of the *Circumciſion*; and St. *Paul* opened the Kingdom of Heaven to many more *Gentiles*, than ever he did. If he had Authority to diſcharge the Converts he made from the Obſervation of the *Ceremonial Law*, St. *Paul*, without doubt, had the ſame with regard to his, and perhaps a clearer Notion

Notion of the *Chriſtian* Liberty, than St. *Peter* ſeems to have had, when he gave Occaſion to the other to *withſtand him to the Face*, and ſo frequently to declare, *that we are not juſtified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of* Jeſus Chriſt: And, whatſoever the Senſe of *binding* and *looſing* may be, 'tis certain, that the ſame Power and Authority was given, in as ample a Manner, to *all* the Apoſtles in general, where it is ſaid, *Whatſoever YE ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever YE ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven:* And again, *Whoſeſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſeſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.* So wiſely did our bleſſed Saviour ſettle an Equality among his Apoſtles, that *there might be no Schiſm* in his Church, but that *in him all the Building fitly framed together* (as the Apoſtle continues the Metaphor) *might grow into an holy Temple in the Lord!*

Nothing certainly can be plainer in Scripture, than that the *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, which our Saviour mentions as a Sin unpardonable, is to be underſtood of the *Phariſees* imputing the Miracles, which he wrought by the Power of the *Holy Ghoſt*, to the Power of the Devil; and yet, I know not how, a great many learned Men have made ſhift to miſtake it. A Denial of *Chriſt*'s Divinity; a Denial of his Religion for fear of ſuffering; a wilful Oppoſition to the Truth; a malicious envying other Mens Graces; groſs Relapſes into Sin, or final Impenitence, and Perſeverance therein, have, ſome by one, and ſome by others, been made the Characteriſticks of this Sin; and yet the very Occaſion of our Saviour's Diſcourſe concerning it cannot but give us quite different Conceptions.

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He had juſt now *healed one poſſeſſed of a Devil, blind and dumb*, whereat the People were much amazed, and began to ſay among themſelves, *Is not this the Son of* David? *i. e.* the promiſed *Meſſiah:* Which when the *Phariſees* underſtood, they gave this vile and malicious Turn to the Miracle, *This Fellow does not caſt out Devils, but by* Beelzebub, *the Prince of the Devils.* This Calumny our Saviour undertook to confute by ſhewing, how unlikely a Thing it was, that the *Devil* ſhould lend him his Power to uſe it againſt himſelf; and then proceeds to diſcourſe of this Sin, *Wherefore I ſay unto you, All Manner of Sin and Blaſphemy* (which is of another Nature) *ſhall be forgiven unto Men, but the Blaſphemy againſt the* Holy Ghoſt *ſhall not be forgiven unto them.* The *Phariſees* therefore are the Perſons charged with the Sin; and the Sin is, their attributing what was done by the *Finger of God* to a *Diabolical Power.*

A learned *Annotator* of our own (Dr. *Whitby*) is of Opinion, That, tho' our Saviour entered upon this Diſcourſe becauſe the *Phariſees* imputed his Miracles to a Confederacy with *Satan*, yet his chief Deſign was to deter his Hearers from blaſpheming the enſuing Diſpenſation of the *Holy Ghoſt*, which, upon his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, he had promiſed to ſend down from Heaven: ſo that this *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt* neither was, nor could be committed, when our Saviour ſpake theſe Words, not until the Time, that its miraculous Gifts were communicated to the Apoſtles, which was on the Day of *Pentecoſt.* But (beſides that our bleſſed Saviour had not as yet made mention either of his own Aſcenſion, or of the Miſſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*) ſince the Power, whereby both he, and his Apoſtles wrought their Miracles, proceeded

ceeded from the ſame divine Spirit, a reviling this Power, when our Saviour did the Miracle, muſt be Blaſphemy againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*, as much as it was, when his Apoſtles did it; and ſo the Difference amounts to nothing.

Our bleſſed Lord indeed, to ſhew that he was ſent from God, wrought Miracles, ſuch as did plainly evince a divine Power and Preſence accompanying him. Theſe Miracles (to which he frequently appeals) the *Phariſees* were Eye-witneſſes of, and therefore could not deny them; yet ſuch was their Hatred and Oppoſition to him and his Doctrine, that, rather than allow his divine Miſſion, they were reſolved to aſcribe all he did to the Power of the Devil: Hereby intending to deſtroy the whole Credit of *Chriſtianity*; and, by making him a Confederate with *Satan*, to repreſent his Religion as the Work and Contrivance of Hell, and ſuch only as would tend to the Miſchief and Deſtruction of Mankind. To ſlander and calumniate the Son of Man was a great Sin, no doubt, but ſuch as might more eaſily be forgiven them, becauſe of his State of Humiliation, and poor Appearance, which might occaſion their Diſ-eſteem: But to repreſent the Spirit of God as an *apoſtate Angel*, and, whatever he did for the Good and Salvation of Mankind, as the Work and Intrigue of the *Devil*, is a Sin of ſuch horrid Nature, as may well deſerve a particular Exemption from the general Promiſe and Covenant of Pardon.

God, no doubt, can, if he will, work ſo powerfully upon the Minds of Men by his Grace and and Spirit, as to convince the moſt obſtinate; and, ſuppoſing them to be convinced, and repent, it cannot be denied, but that they would be forgiven:

And

And therefore, when our Saviour ſays, that ſuch *as blaſpheme againſt the* Holy Ghoſt, *ſhall not be forgiven*, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that he means, that when Men are come to ſuch a Degree of inveterate Malice, God (as he juſtly may) will withdraw his Grace from them, and leave them to the Bent of their perverſe Minds, which will inſenſibly engage them in a farther Oppoſition to the Truth, and ſink them finally into Perdition: ſo that being deſerted of God, and, for want of the neceſſary Aid of his Grace, continuing finally impenitent, they become incapable of Forgiveneſs, *both in this World, and in that which is to come.* The ſhort then of all this is, that the *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt* is unpardonable; not becauſe there is not a Sufficiency of Merit in *Chriſt* to attone for it, or of Mercy in God the Father to forgive it, but becauſe thoſe, who commit it, are of ſuch a refractory and incorrigible Spirit, that they reſiſt the laſt and utmoſt Means of their Conviction, and conſequently neither will nor can repent; eſpecially if God in Judgment (as it ſometimes happens) and *becauſe they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be ſaved, ſhould ſend upon them a ſtrong Deluſion, that they might believe a Lye.*

That which has made ſome Paſſages, in the ſixth Chapter of St. *John*'s Goſpel, and eſpecially the Command of *eating the Fleſh, and drinking the Blood of the Son of Man*, a Matter of ſo much Perplexity, is the want of attending to the Occaſion of his Diſcourſe, and the figurative Forms of Expreſſion, that were then in Uſe in the *Eaſtern* Nations. Our Lord, it ſeems, but the Day before, had fed a great Number of People with a very ſmall Matter of Proviſions. The Day following, they reſort

to

The Begger is carried by Angels into Abrahams Bosom. Luke 16. 22.

to him, in hopes of the ſame bounteous Supply. Our Lord, who knew their Deſign, rebuked their greedy Appetite. They, in Return, reminded him of *Moſes*'s Liberality (much ſuperior to his) in providing them *Manna* for the Space of forty Years. Hereupon our Lord took Occaſion to acquaint them, *that he was the Bread of God, which came down from Heaven*, highly preferable to *Manna*, foraſmuch as that gave only their Forefathers a *tranſitory*, but this an *everlaſting Life to the whole World*: For *he that cometh to me* (continues he) *ſhall never hunger, and he that believeth in me ſhall never thirſt*; and, again, *I am the living* (or rather *Life-giving*) *Bread, which came down from Heaven; if any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever, and the Bread that I will give him is my Fleſh, which I will give for the Life of the World: For my Fleſh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed. He that eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.*

Now, whoſoever conſiders the Genius of the *Eaſtern* Languages, abounding in lofty, and ſometimes abſtruſe Figures, and how common a Thing it was among the *Jews* eſpecially, to uſe the Metaphors of eating and drinking in a ſpiritual Senſe, *viz.* to denote the Exerciſe, or Improvement of any of the intellective Faculties of the Soul, will not be much ſurprized at our Saviour's expreſſing himſelf in this Manner. *Ho, every one that thirſteth* (ſays the Prophet, exhorting the People to hear his Inſtructions) *come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy Wine, and Milk, without Money, and without Price; and eat ye that which is good, and*

let your Soul delight itſelf in Fatneſs. To the ſame Purpoſe we frequently find *Philo* calling Wiſdom and Virtue the Food of the Soul, which nouriſhes it to eternal Life; and the *Talmudiſts* telling us that *all the Eating and Drinking, which is mentioned in the Book of* Eccleſiaſtes, *relates to the Obſervation of the Law, and good Works:* Nay, *Manna*, in particular, (according to the Senſe of ſome *Jewiſh* Authors) was an eminent Type of *Chriſt*; and therefore, the *good Man* (ſays *Philo*) *lifts up his Eyes to Heaven, looking to the* Manna, *the divine and heavenly* Logos, *the incorruptible Food of the Soul, that loves God*; and if this was the *Jews* Senſe of Things, our Saviour was guilty of no Preſumption in ſtiling himſelf the *true Bread which came down from Heaven*; nor of any Abſurdity, in inſiſting upon a Metaphor which ſo frequently occurred in the beſt of their Authors: The only Queſtion is, Whether our Saviour's Words, in this Place, are to be taken in a literal or metaphorical Senſe, *i. e.* Whether they relate to a corporeal or ſpiritual Eating his Fleſh?

There is ſomething ſo ſhocking in the very Notion of one Man's eating the Fleſh of another, that, when the *Jews* heard our Saviour (as they imagined) diſcourſe at this rate, they might well ſay, *How can this Man give us his Fleſh to eat?* "Will he cut it in Pieces, and diſtribute to every "one of us a Share? 'Tis no agreeable Thought "to eat human Fleſh, but (ſuppoſing we could "bring ourſelves to that) how could he multiply "himſelf in ſo many Parts, as that each of us "might have one? Or how could himſelf ſubſiſt, "if he ſhould, in this barbarous and inhuman "Manner, cut, and mangle his own Body?"

This

This ſeems to be the Reaſoning of the *Jews* upon the Caſe: But, on all Hands, it is agreed, that they miſtook the Senſe of our Saviour's Words, and fancied ſuch a Meaning in them, as he never intended; whereas, had the literal Senſe been the proper and intended Meaning, 'tis certain, that they impoſed no falſe Conſtruction upon what he ſaid, ſince, upon this Suppoſition, he intended, that this human Fleſh ſhould properly be eaten, and they, in their queſtioning the Truth of what he ſaid, meant no more.

We may obſerve farther, that when our Saviour knew within himſelf, that the Abſtruſeneſs of his Diſcourſe upon this Subject had given ſome Diſguſt to his Diſciples, *he ſaid unto them, Does this offend you? What, and if you ſhould ſee the Son of Man aſcend up where he was before?* The only Senſe of which Words can be, "Are you "offended that I thus ſpeak of giving you my "*Fleſh to eat?* Do you look on this Expreſſion "*now* as a Thing ſo very abſurd and unintelligi-"ble? What then will you think of it, when *this* "Body is removed hence into Heaven? *i. e.* how "will you then be ſcared, and think it ſtill more "difficult, and more impoſſible to apprehend, "how ye ſhall then eat my Fleſh, and drink my "Blood, provided ye go on to underſtand my "Words in a groſs and carnal Manner." For *Athanaſius* has well obſerved, that our Saviour here mentions his Aſcent into Heaven, that he might divert his Diſciples from entertaining a carnal Senſe of his Words: And therefore his Argument is, ——"Since it will be then impoſſible for you to "eat my Fleſh corporeally, when it is ſo far re-"moved from you, by this you may perceive,

" that my Purpoſe is that you ſhould underſtand " my Words in a ſpiritual Senſe.

We may obſerve again, that when ſeveral Diſciples revolted upon the Account of this *hard Saying*, (as it is called) and our Saviour was apprehenſive that his Apoſtles might do the like, St. *Peter*, in the Name of the reſt, anſwers him, *Lord, to whom ſhall we go? Thou haſt the Words of eternal Life:* Whereas, had he underſtood our Saviour as ſpeaking here of *oral Manducation*, his Anſwer, very probably, would have been to this Effect: " Whatſoever Appearance there may be " of Inhumanity, Abſurdity, and Impoſſibility " in eating thy natural Fleſh, and drinking thy " Blood, yet we believe it, becauſe thou haſt ſaid " it, who art Truth itſelf, and able to make good " thy Words." But ſince we hear nothing from him of this Tendency, we may reaſonably conclude, that he had no ſuch Notion of our Saviour's Words. And indeed our Saviour, one would think, had done enough to explain his own Meaning, when he tells us, that the *Eating*, which he intends, is *believing on him*, and that it was ſuch an Eating as would make a Man *live for ever*; that *Fleſh* (if we could eat it) *profiteth nothing*, ſince the Soul can only be nouriſhed by ſpiritual Food; and that therefore *the Words, which he ſpake unto them, were Spirit, i.e.* were to be underſtood in a ſpiritual Senſe, otherwiſe they would not be conducive to eternal Life: And therefore *Euſebius* introduces our Saviour as thus addreſſing his Diſciples, " Do not think that I ſpeak of that Fleſh " wherewith I am compaſſed, as if you muſt eat " of that; neither imagine, that I command you " to drink my *bodily* Blood; but underſtand well,

" that

" that the Words which I have ſpoken unto you " *they are Spirit and Life.*" For (as St. *Auſtine* lays down this Rule for the Expoſition of Scripture Phraſes) " If the Saying be perceptive, either for- " bidding a wicked Action, or injoining a good " one, it is no figurative Speech; but if it ſeems " to command any Wickedneſs, or to forbid what " is profitable and good, it is figurative." Accordingly, this Saying. *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood*, ſeems to command a wicked Thing, and is therefore a Figure, enjoining us to communicate in the Paſſion of our Lord, and ſweetly and profitably remember, that his Fleſh was wounded and crucified for us. In this Senſe his Fleſh and Blood are *truly Meat and Drink*; becauſe the Eating of this Fleſh by Faith in his ſalutary Paſſion doth nouriſh the Soul to Life eternal; and the drinking of his Blood by Faith, as that which was *ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins*, does refreſh the Perſon, thirſting after Righteouſneſs, and convey into him a Principle of living *well*, and of living *for ever*.

Thus we have gone through the ſeveral Objections, that are uſually made to the Facts contained in the Evangelical Hiſtory of this Period; and (if it would be of any farther Satisfaction to thoſe, that delight to make them) we might ſhew that, whatever is recorded of our bleſſed Saviour, the like, in one Inſtance or other, the *Heathens* themſelves have acknowledged in their deified Heroes and great Men: That the ſame Power of curing all Kinds of Diſeaſes the *Greeks* aſcribe to their *Eſculapius*, and the *Egyptians* to their *Serapis* and *Iſis*: That *Hadrian* (according to *Spartianus*) was cured of a Fever by the Touch of a certain blind Man:

Man: That *Seſoſtris*, King of *Egypt*, upon offering a Sacrifice to the God *Mnevis*, was reſtored to his Eye-ſight: That *Veſpaſian* (if we believe *Tacitus*) cured a Man of his Lameneſs, and another of his Blindneſs by anointing his Eyes with Spittle, in the manner that our Saviour did; and that *Apollonius Tyanæus* (whom *Philoſtratus* ſets up as a powerful Rival of our Lord's Miracles) cured a young Man, that was poſſeſſed with a Devil; and, when he had reſtored him to his Senſes, received him into the Number of his Diſciples. *Simplicius*, in his Diſſertations upon *Epictetus*, ſeems to promiſe to all pious and wiſe Men the Power of calming the Waves of the Sea; and how *Neptune* rebuked and allayed the Winds, which, without his Permiſſion, had raiſed a tempeſtuous Storm, is a Story well known, and well ſet off in *Virgil*. Every Poet almoſt mentions this ſame *Neptune*'s riding in his Chariot on the Surface of the Sea; and the Tradition is, that, to his Son *Euphemus*, and his Nephew *Orion*, he gave the Faculty of walking upon it without Fear of ſinking. Nothing can be more common among the Fictions of theſe Writers, than the Transfiguration of their Gods upon one Occaſion or other; and, that our Saviour's Method of electing his Diſciples might not want a Preſident in profane Hiſtory, we are told, that the famous *Eaſtern* Philoſopher *Confucius*, out of the three thouſand Followers that he had, made choice of *ſeventy-two* of principal Note, and, out of theſe, of *twelve* only to be his more immediate Companions, and to whom he committed the hidden Myſteries of his Philoſophy: But our Happineſs is, that the Credibility of the Scripture-hiſtory wants no ſuch weak Supports as theſe.

DISSER-

DISSERTATION I.

The Completion of Prophecies a Proof of the Truth of the Chriſtian *Religion; though they be obſcure; and delivered at ſeveral different Times. The Prophecies relating to the* Meſſiah *fulfilled in our Saviour; and that by a viſible Interpoſition of Providence; which is a certain Proof of our Saviour's divine Miſſion. An Objection anſwered, by ſhewing that the* Chriſtian *Interpretation of the Prophecies is true: Why the modern* Jews *have departed from it. The twenty-ſecond* Pſalm *not applicable to* David; *nor the Prophecy of* Micah, *in Fact, to* Zorobabel; *nor that of* Iſaiah *to the* Jewiſh *People. Why we* Chriſtians *ought to adhere to the preſent Application of the Prophecies.*

ONE great Evidence of our Saviour's divine Miſſion, and, conſequently, of the Truth of his Religion, is the Completion of the ancient Prophecies, relating to the *Meſſiah*, in his Perſon, Doctrine, and Miracles. He indeed makes more frequent appeal to his Miracles; John v. 36. *The Works which the Father hath given me to finiſh*, ſays he, *the ſame Works, that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me:* But ſince, at the ſame Time, he lays Claim to the Character of being the Perſon ſpoken of by *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, when he bids the People, ver. 39. *ſearch the Scriptures, becauſe they teſtify of him*; 'tis certain, that his Title

Title to the *Meſſiahſhip* muſt be tried by the Teſtimony of the Prophets; and that all the miraculous Works which he did, will not prove him to be the *Meſſenger of the Covenant*, whom God was to ſend, unleſs the ſeveral Predictions, which his Servants the Prophets gave of that renowned Perſon, are found to unite and agree in him. It can hardly be thought, but that God Almighty, who deſigned ſuch an ineſtimable Benefit for Mankind, as the ſending his own Son into the World for the Redemption of it, ſhould give ſome previous Notice of his Coming, and draw his Picture (as it were) ſo much to the Life and Likeneſs, that, when the Original ſhould be brought to View, it might be known and diſtinguiſhed by it. It is acknowledged, I think, on all Hands, that the Prophets, *at ſundry Times, and in diverſe Manners*, have done this; that each of them, in his Turn, has drawn a Feature (if I may ſo ſay) and left ſome maſterly Stroke behind him of this great Perſonage, that was to come from Heaven; that one has deſcribed his *Parentage*, another the *Time*, another the *Place*, and another the *uncommon Manner of his Birth*; that ſome have taken notice of the moſt remarkable Actions and Events of his *Life*; and ſeveral of the moſt minute, and altogether ſingular Circumſtances of his *Death*; that by ſome his *Reſurrection* is foretold, by others his *Aſcent* to the Throne of God, and by others the perpetual *Duration* of his Kingdom: And if the Prophets are allowed to have done this, our only Enquiry is, whether the Lineaments, which they, in their ſeveral Capacities, have drawn of the promiſed *Meſſiah* (when all brought together) be anſwerable to the Account which the *Evangeliſts* have given us in their Hiſtory of the bleſſed *Jeſus*.

We

We readily own indeed, that there is a great Obſcurity in the ancient Prophecies. They are generally penned in a very exalted Stile, and abound with ſo many bold Metaphors, and hyperbolical Expreſſions; ſo many Allegories, and Parables, and other abſtruſe Forms of Speech, as make it very difficult for the Interpreters of Scripture to diſcover their true Scope or Meaning. The Prophecies relating to the *Meſſiah* are ſtill more obſcure, becauſe, as they conſider him in the different Capacities of his Humiliation and Exaltation, unleſs this Diſtinction is taken along with us, when we apply them to one and the ſame Perſon, they will ſeem to load his Character with Contradictions. But ſtill, ſince it is acknowledged, that the great Deſign of Prophecy was to acquaint the World with the *Meſſiah*, and that, upon whatever particular Occaſions God ſent his Meſſengers, he always made this one Part of his Errand, we can hardly believe, that he would multiply theſe Meſſages to no Purpoſe; or, when he pretended to reveal this Matter to them, mock them with unintelligible Words, and leave them as much in the Dark as he found them. He might indeed, for wiſe Purpoſes, *multiply Viſions, and uſe Similitudes, and dark Speeches, by the Miniſtry of the Prophets*; but, in this grand Diſcovery of all, he certainly left ſuch Indications, as enabled thoſe who *looked for the Redemption of* Iſrael, and accordingly, made it their Buſineſs to ſearch the Scriptures, and enquire into the Marks of the *Meſſiah*, to attain a competent Knowledge of them; nor can it well be doubted, but that the *Jews* had ſome fixed and well-known Rules (though they have not deſcended to us) whereby they diſtinguiſhed the Paſſages in

the prophetick Writings, which related to this important Subject, from any others, becauſe we find, that, when *Herod* ſummoned the *Sanhedrim* together, and demanded of them, *where* Chriſt *was to be born*, they readily replied, at *Bethlehem* in *Judea*; having the Prophecy of *Micah* to that Purpoſe ready to produce.

We acknowledge again, that the Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah* were delivered, not only in an obſcure Manner, but in different Proportions, and at very diſtant Times. Thus to *Adam* and *Eve* he was promiſed in general, as a *Man*; to *Abraham*, as his *Poſterity*; to *Jacob*, as deſcending from the Tribe of *Judah* in particular; to *David*, that he ſhould be of his Family, and the *Fruit of his Body*; to *Micah*, that he ſhould be born at *Bethlehem*; to *Iſaiah*, that his Birth ſhould be miraculous, and his Mother a *Virgin*; to the ſame Prophet, that his Death ſhould be for the Redemption of Mankind; to *Daniel*, when the preciſe Time of his Suffering ſhould be; to *Haggai*, laſtly, and *Zechariah* and *Malachi*, that all theſe Events ſhould be accompliſhed before the Deſtruction of the *ſecond Temple*. Now (not to mention any more) if we compute the Seaſons of theſe few, the general Prediction of a *Saviour* in *human Nature* will be found to bear Date, before that of his being *Abraham*'s Seed, about two thouſand and fourſcore Years; from this, to the Declaration of his particular Tribe, were two hundred and fourſcore Years; thence to the Prophecy of his particular Family, above ſix hundred Years; after that, to the Signification of his miraculous Nativity, more than three hundred Years; and from thence, to the Time of his publick Appearance

rance in the World, three hundred and fifty Years, or thereabouts. Now ſince theſe Prophecies were thus delivered by Degrees, and at ſuch diſtant and different Times, it may eaſily ſo happen, that, conſidering them ſingly and apart, we may find ſome Perſon and Event, to which they may be adapted, without any great Violence to the Text; but then the right Way, in this Caſe, to make a right Judgment, is, not by ſeparate and particular Paſſages, but by the Connection of the Whole, by the exact Coincidence and intire Agreement of all the Prophecies, which, at ſeveral Times, denoted the *Meſſiah*, brought into one Point of Light, and laid together. This is the only Method we have to determine the Matter: And accordingly, let us now look into ſome of the principal Paſſes of our Saviour's Life, as it is recorded by the *Evangeliſts*, and ſo ſee whether they do not exactly agree with the ſeveral Characters which the Prophets have given us of the *Meſſiah*.

Our *Lord Jeſus*, we are told, was conceived, and born of a pure Virgin, without the Concurrence of any Man, for ſo the Prophecy had foretold, that the *Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head*, and that *a Virgin ſhould conceive, and bear a Son, and call his Name* Immanuel. He was deſcended of the Family of *David*, and born at the Town of *Bethlehem*; becauſe, in Favour to that King, God had promiſed that *he would eſtabliſh his Seed for ever*; and that *out of* Bethlehem *a Ruler of* Iſrael *ſhould come, whoſe Goings-forth had been from Everlaſting*: And he was born in the Reign of King *Herod*, *i. e.* before the total Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* Government, and during the ſtanding of the ſecond Temple, becauſe one Prophecy

ſays, that *the Sceptre ſhould not depart from* Judah *until* Shiloh *come*; and another, that *the Deſire of all Nations ſhould come*; and, by his Preſence, make the *Glory of* God's *latter Houſe greater than that of the former.*

Well: But before his Appearance in the World, *John the Baptiſt* was appointed his Forerunner, and came to bear Witneſs of him, becauſe the Lord, by the Mouth of his Prophets had ſaid, *Behold I ſend My Meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the Way before me,* he ſhall *cry in the Wilderneſs, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord make ſtraight an Highway for our God.* When he made his Appearance in the World, he took up his chief Reſidence in the Province of *Galilee,* becauſe the Prophet, ſpeaking of the Inhabitants of that Country, tells us, that *upon them, who dwelt before in the Land of the Shadow of Death, did a great Light ſhine,* when they had it to ſay, *unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder,* &c. When he came to converſe in it, ſuch was his quiet and inoffenſive Temper and Behaviour, that the Prophet did not miſrepreſent him, when he ſtiled him *the Prince of Peace,* and one who *would not cry, nor cauſe a Voice to be heard in the Streets.* When he entered upon his publick Miniſtry, the very Actions, which the Evangelical Prophet had foretold of the *Meſſiah,* he performed to a Title; *For he preached good Tidings to the Meek, and proclaimed Liberty to the Captives*; he *opened the Eyes of the Blind, and unſtopped the Ears of the Deaf*; *he made the lame Man to leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb to ſing.*

But, during the Courſe of his Miniſtry, our Saviour,

viour, we read, lived in a very mean, obſcure Condition, and ſuffered at laſt a violent Death: And why ſo? Becauſe of the *Meſſiah* it was foretold, that he *ſhould be deſpiſed, and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief, who ſhould be cut off from the Land of the Living, and pour out his Soul unto Death.* But, for whom ſhould he ſuffer all this? For us Men and our Salvation: For ſo it was appointed, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould *bear our Griefs, and carry our Sorrows; that he ſhould be wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our Iniquities,* becauſe the *Lord would lay upon him the Iniquities of us all.* And in what Manner was he to ſuffer? With a Patience and Meekneſs anſwerable to the Prophecy, "He was oppreſſed, "and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth, "he was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and "as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, ſo he "opened not his Mouth.

It might ſeem a little ſtrange, that our Lord, who, all his Life-time, affected no Popularity, ſhould, a little before his Death, make his publick Entry into *Jeruſalem,* and in a Manner ſo very ſingular, had not the Prophet called upon "the Daughter of *Zion* to rejoice greatly, becauſe "her King was coming unto her, bringing Salva-"tion, lowly, and riding upon an Aſs, and a Colt, "the Foal of an Aſs." Strange, that he ſhould be betrayed by his own Diſciple, to whom he had been ſo very kind, had not the *Pſalmiſt* foretold it in theſe Words, "Mine own familiar Friend "in whom I truſted, which did eat of my Bread, "hath lift up his Heel againſt me:" And ſtrange, that, of all other Deaths, he ſhould be ſentenced to Crucifixion, which was neither a *Jewiſh* Puniſh-

ment,

ment, nor proper to be inflicted for the Crime of Blaſphemy, that was alledged againſt him, had not the ſame royal Prophet determined the Manner in theſe Words, "They pierced my Hands and "my Feet, they ſtand ſtaring, and looking upon "me.

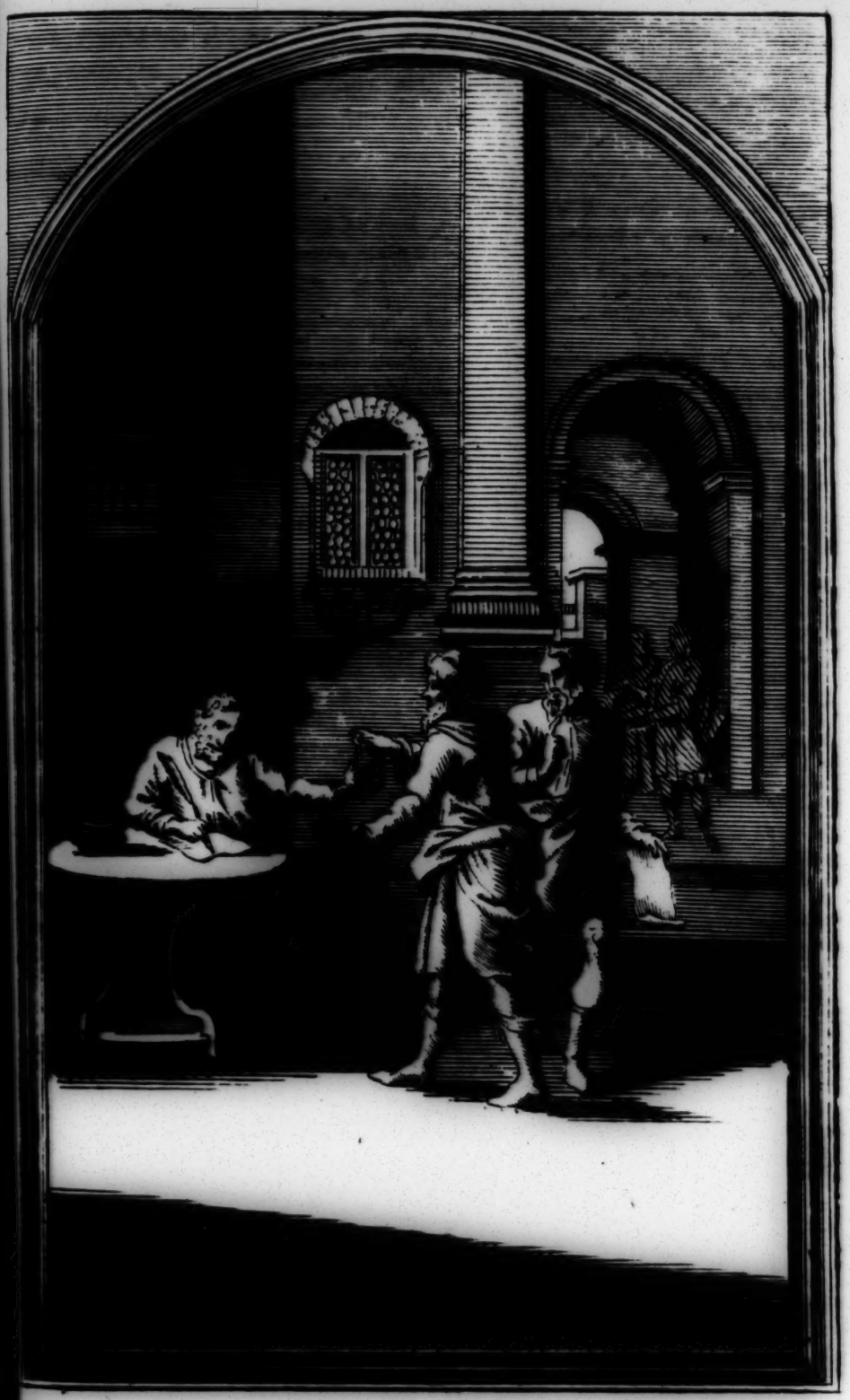
Such then was the Will of God, that the Saviour of the World ſhould be crucified; but in what Company did he ſuffer? The Goſpel tells us, *between two Thieves*; becauſe the Prophecy had declared, that he ſhould *be numbered with the Tranſgreſſors.* But how did the Spectators behave while he was hanging upon the Croſs? Juſt in the ſame Manner that the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribed; "All they "that ſee me laugh me to ſcorn, they ſhoot out "the Lip, and ſhake their Head, ſaying, He "truſted in the Lord, that he would deliver him, "let him deliver him, if he would have him." What did they give him to drink in the mean Time? A *narcotick* Potion was generally allowed in ſuch Caſes, to ſtupify the Senſe of Pain; but in his nothing but *Vinegar*, becauſe the Prophecy before had ſpecified the Liquor; "They gave me "Gaul to eat, and when I was thirſty, they gave "me Vinegar to drink:" (For this Cuſtom of giving Drink to Malefactors going to Execution, the *Jews* ground themſelves upon the Words of *Solomon*, "Give ſtrong Drink to him that is ready "to periſh, and Wine to thoſe that are of an heavy "Heart: Let him drink, and forget his Poverty, "and remember his Miſery no more, *Prov.* xxxi. 7. The uſual Potion of this Kind was Frankincenſe in a Glaſs of Wine; and there is a Tradition among them, that the Ladies of the City of *Jeruſalem* were at the Charge, of their own Good-will, for

for the Eaſe of the poor Sufferers: But notwithſtanding this Cuſtom, what God foretold was fulfilled.) And what became of his Clothes? All diſpoſed of according to the Prophecy; "They "parted my Garments among them, and upon my "Veſture did they caſt Lots.

But under all theſe Provocations and Indignities, what did he do? Why he prayed to God for the Forgiveneſs of his Crucifiers; becauſe the Prophet had foretold, that "while he poured out his Soul "unto Death, he ſhould alſo make Interceſſion for "the Tranſgreſſors." In his greater Agonies what were his Ejaculations to God? The ſame that the royal *Pſalmiſt*, perſonating the *Meſſiah* in his Extremity, has left upon Record: "My God, "my God, look upon me, why haſt thou forſaken "me, and art ſo far from my Help, and from the "Words of my Complaint?" What were the Words, wherein he gave up the *Holy Ghoſt?* The very ſame that the *Pſalmiſt*, in another Place, had deſcribed, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.* But, after our Saviour's Death, in what Manner was his Body diſpoſed of? Contrary to the Cuſtom of the *Romans*, who left thoſe that ſuffered in this manner hanging upon the Croſs, until they were conſumed; and contrary to the Intention of his Enemies, who wiſhed him no better than a Malefactor's Funeral, he was honourably and nobly interred, becauſe it was pre-ordained, that *he ſhould make his Grave with the Rich in his Death.* After his Burial, what became of his Body? It was raiſed again, and reſtored from the State of the Dead; becauſe, in Confidence of this he laid down his Life, that *God would not leave his Soul in Hell, nor ſuffer his Holy One to ſee Corruption.*

ruption. After his Reſurrection, and Continuance for ſome Time upon the Earth, what did he do next? In the Sight of his Diſciples and ſeveral other Spectators, aſcend triumphantly into Heaven; for ſo the divine Order was; *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in.* After his Aſcenſion into Heaven what did he finally do? Send down the *Holy Ghoſt* upon his Apoſtles, to enable them to propagate his Religion all the World over; for ſuch is the Purport of the Prophecy, *Thou art gone up on high, thou haſt led Captivity captive, and received Gifts for Men, that the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe might be eſtabliſhed on the Top of the Mountains, and exalted above the Hills, and that all Nations ſhould flow unto it.*

Upon the Whole then we may perceive, that the ſeveral Things which the Prophets had foretold of the promiſed *Meſſiah*, were fulfilled in the Perſon and Actions of our bleſſed Saviour; but then there is ſomething farther to be conſidered in this Matter, and that is, the viſible Interpoſition of an over-ruling Providence, in the Completion of theſe Predictions. For that our Lord ſhould be born of a Virgin, contrary to the known Laws of Nature; at the City of *Bethlehem*, when he was conceived at *Nazareth*; and under the Declenſion of the *Jewiſh* Polity, as it was predicted; that upon the Cruelty of *Herod*, he ſhould be carried into *Egypt*; upon the Succeſſion of *Archelaus*, return into *Judea*, and ſettle his Abode in the obſcure Country of *Galilee*, whence no good Thing, much leſs ſo eminent a Prophet could have ever been expected to come: That the Judge, who pronounced him innocent,



The unjust Stewards Method of Reckoning with his Lords Debtors. Luke 16. 5.

innocent, ſhould deliver him to Death; and to the Death of the Croſs, who (had he been guilty) muſt, by the Law of the Land, have been ſtoned: That he, who had ſo many Enemies, ſhould be betrayed by one of his Diſciples, and by a Diſciple who carried the Bag, and conſequently all his Maſter's Riches, for a vile Sum of Money; and that this Money, the *Price of Blood*, ſhould be employ'd in a Work of Charity, to *buy a Field to bury Strangers in*: That he, who ſpent all his Time in doing Good, ſhould be doomed to ſuffer among Thieves and Malefactors; and the Multitude, who were wont to pity dying Criminals, ſhould inſult and deride him in his greateſt Miſery; but he held his Peace and ſaid nothing, when not only his Enemies were ſo clamorous againſt him, but the whole Creation groaned and was diſordered: That in the Diviſion of his Cloaths they ſhould caſt Lots for his Coat, and contrary to the Uſage of the Country, in the Midſt of his Agonies, give him Vinegar to drink: That, contrary to the Practice of the *Romans*, he that was crucified, ſhould be permitted to be buried, and altho' he died among Malefactors, have Perſons of the firſt Rank and Character joining together in his honourable Interment: Theſe and ſeveral other Particulars, that might be produced, are ſo very ſtrange and ſurprizing, that they muſt need ſtrike every pious and devout Soul with a profound Senſe of the unſpeakable Wiſdom, as well as Goodneſs of God, in accompliſhing in *Jeſus*, what he had promiſed and foretold of the *Meſſiah*, by Ways and Means, to human Wiſdom very unlikely, and very diſpropertionate. And if the Predictions relating to the *Meſſiah*, have in this wonderful

derful Manner, and by the particular Direction and Appointment of Providence, thus met in the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, like Lines in one common Centre, the natural Reſult of this Contemplation is, *that* Jeſus *is the* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God.*

For can it be imagined, with any worthy Conception of God, that a Work of Love and Wonder, ſo great as the ſending his Son to redeem the World, ſhould be in Agitation for full four thouſand Years; that each ſucceeding Age in this long Space, ſhould have ſome Notices of it; that the ſeveral Characters he was to ſuſtain, ſhould be deſcribed by different Prophets, living at Times and Places ſo remote, that no Confederacy could be ſuſpected; that each of theſe Prophets ſhould draw ſome one Line of him, and ſome another, and point him out, ſome in one Capacity, and ſome in another; and, above all, that every one of theſe Strokes or Lineaments ſhould be directed by the unerring Hand of God, to make at laſt one finiſhed Picture, on Purpoſe that the Original, when it appeared, might be found out and diſtinguiſhed by it; can it be imagined, I ſay, that a God of infinite Truth, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, would have ever permitted, much leſs appointed, that our bleſſed Lord ſhould, in every Part and Lineament, be ſo exactly like that Piece, unleſs he intended, that we ſhould receive him, as the true Original? Unleſs we can entertain a Thought ſo unworthy of God, I ſay, as that he deſigned to impoſe upon us, in the whole Diſpenſation, we cannot but conclude, that he would never have permitted all the Marks belonging to the *Meſſiah*, to have concurred in the Life of our bleſſed Saviour, by theſe Marks have ſuffered ſo many Mil-

lions of Souls to have been miſtaken in the Object of their Faith and Worſhip; and thereupon, without any Fault of theirs, be deluded into the heinous Sin of Idolatry, had he not appointed the Man *Chriſt Jeſus* to be the great Saviour of the World, and the *Lord of Life and Glory*.

" But you are frequently miſtaken (ſays the " the *Jews*, to avoid the Force of this) in your " Application of theſe prophetical Paſſages to " your *Jeſus*, which properly belonged to ano- " ther Perſon, and in him received their utmoſt " Accompliſhment. The twenty-third *Pſalm*, for " Inſtance, which complains of the Sufferings and " Indignities, which its Author endured, you re- " fer to the *Meſſiah*, and thence appropriate to " your *Jeſus*; whereas it relates intirely to *Da-* " *vid*, and the Troubles he underwent, under " the Perſecution of *Saul*. The Prophecy of " *Micah*, which makes mention of a *Ruler, whoſe* " *Goings-forth had been from everlaſting*, (what- " ever uſe you make of it) was only intended " of *Zerubbabel*, who was ſprung from the antient " Houſe of *David*; and that famous fifty-third " Chapter of *Iſaiah*, which is ſo frequently ci- " ted by the Apoſtles, when rightly enquired " into, is nothing elſe but a lively Deſcription " of the Sufferings of the *Jews*, under the *Ba-* " *byloniſh*, or ſome other Captivity. Thus by " miſapplying and miſinterpreting ſeveral Texts " in ſuch a Senſe as the *Jewiſh* Church never in- " tended, you bedeck your *Jeſus* with Feathers " that are none of his own, and then cry out, " How well he becomes them, and how exactly " they befit him! "

The Completion of Prophecies, in the Perſon

of our Saviour *Chriſt*, is one of the moſt general Arguments that the firſt *Chriſtians* made uſe of, in order to convert ſuch as were perſuaded of their divine Authority. St. *Peter*, in his firſt publick Sermon that he made, out of the ſixteenth and hundred and tenth *Pſalms*, cites two Paſſages, which he plainly ſhews could not be intended of the Patriarch *David*, to prove our *Lord*'s Reſurrection, and Exaltation to Glory. St. *Paul*, who by being brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, underſtood the Force of this Argument, uſed more Proofs of this Kind, than any other Writer of the *New Teſtament*, as the leaſt Caſt of an Eye into his Epiſtles to the *Romans*, *Galatians*, and *Hebrews* will ſhow: and St. *Matthew*, who wrote his Goſpel for the Uſe of the *Jews* more particularly, and for that Reaſon wrote it (as ſome imagine) in the *Hebrew* Tongue, is more expreſs and copious in his Application of the Prophecies to our bleſſed Saviour, than any of the other *Evangeliſts*.

Now (to mention no more than theſe) how abſurd would it have been for theſe Apoſtles, who were no Strangers to the *Jewiſh* Way of arguing, to alledge any Paſſage in the Prophets, as relating to the *Meſſiah*, which properly belonged to another Perſon, in whom it had its Accompliſhment? Such a Method of Proceeding could not fail of diſcovering their Confidence and Folly, of expoſing them to the Scorn and Ridicule of their Adverſaries, and inſtead of gaining Proſelytes, of ruining the Cauſe, which, by ſuch unfair Practices, they endeavoured to maintain, It is but ſuppoſing then, that theſe Apoſtles were Men of common Senſe, and deſirous to promote the Cauſe that they

they had taken in Hand; and then we can hardly think, that they argued from any Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah*, but ſuch as really belonged to him, and ſuch as the whole *Jewiſh* Church acknowledged ſo to do.

St. *Peter*, by Virtue of the Sermon, which he preached on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, made about three thouſand Converts to the *Chriſtian* Faith, and yet it is obvious, that the whole Hinge of his Diſcourſe turns upon the Teſtimony of the Prophets; had he therefore applied this Teſtimony, either to Perſons to whom it did not belong, or in a Senſe contrary to its true Intendment, his Doctrine muſt have been exploded at once, and could never have met with ſuch uncommon Succeſs. And in like manner, as to the ſubſequent Converſions which the Apoſtles made, how can we imagine that ſuch a Number of *Jews*, of all Degrees, Rulers, Prieſts, and *Scribes* of all Sects, Men of Learning, and who by their Stations and Profeſſions, were obliged to know the Scriptures, ſhould forſake the Religion they were accuſtomed to, upon the Authority of Paſſages, which in their proper Meaning and Intendment, were ſo far from countenancing, that they openly confronted the new Religion they were to embrace, and all this without View of worldly Intereſt, with the certain Hazard of their Lives here, and the Loſs of God's Favour hereafter, in caſe of Inſincerity?

Upon the Whole, therefore, we may conclude, that every *Jew*, converted to the Chriſtian Faith, is an implicit Proof that the Apoſtles Allegations of the antient Prophecies, both as to the Ground and Senſe of them, were agreeable to their received Notions of them, inſomuch, that were we

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at leiſure to enter into Particulars, we might ſhew that it is hardly poſſible to name one ſingle Prediction of the many applied to the bleſſed *Jeſus*, which one or other of their moſt celebrated Writers do not acknowledge to belong to the *Meſſiah*.

The modern *Jews*, it muſt be owned, have fallen off from the Notions of their more ingenuous Anceſtors, and to deny the Prophecies, quoted in the *New Teſtament*, thoſe Views, that we would aſcribe to them: But whoever conſiders the Deſtruction of their City and Polity, which confounded all their Expectations of a glorious *Meſſiah*, and put them upon new Meaſures in the Application of ſuch Predictions as they ſaw muſt needs have been fulfilled, while their State and Temple ſtood: Whoever conſiders the Darkneſs and Ignorance, that would neceſſarily enſue upon their long Diſperſion, and many ſad Calamities, when they fell into the Hands of perſecuting Powers, who hated them and Religion moſt implacably: Whoever conſiders their Neglect of applying themſelves to the Study of the written Law, and attending wholly to their oral Law, and affecting to be curious in Ceremonies, while they continued careleſs of their Doctrines: Whoever conſiders their violent Prejudices againſt *Jeſus* and his Diſciples, which, as it ſtuck at nothing, tho' never ſo falſe or wicked, to oppoſe them, might eaſily put them upon tampering with the Scriptures, and by Interpolations or Defalcations labouring to make them look another Way: And laſtly, whoever conſiders that judicial Blindneſs and Hardneſs of Heart, ſo often and expreſly threatned, and ſo viſibly and lamentably inflicted upon

upon this once elect People of God: [May he, in his infinite Mercy, ſo open their Eyes, that they may ſee the wonderful Things of the Law, and its Agreement with the bleſſed Goſpel!] Whoever conſiders theſe Things, I ſay, will not be at a Loſs for a Raeſon, why the preſent *Synagogue* have departed from the Sentiments of the ancient, and are ſo earneſt to apply to *David*, *Solomon*, *Hezekiah*, *Zorobabel*, or any other Perſon of Note, what their Anceſtors never thought of attributing to any other than the promiſed *Meſſiah*.

One of their famous Interpreters, in his Comment upon the twenty-third *Pſalm*, after ſome feeble Efforts to wreſt that Evidence out of our Hands, makes at length this ample Confeſſion: *Our great Maſters*, ſays he, *have interpreted this* Pſalm *of* Meſſiah *the King, but I ſhall interpret it of* David *himſelf, that we may have wherewith to anſwer the Hereticks.* But, with all his Art and Subtility, he can never make it out, how *David*, with any Propriety, can ſay of himſelf, *As for me, I am a Worm, and no Man, the very Scorn of Men, and the Out-caſt of the People*, Pſal. xxii. 6. The greateſt Affliction that ever befel that Prince, was his Expulſion from his capital City, upon the Rebellion of his Son *Abſalom*, and *Shimei*'s Curſing and Upbraiding may ſeem, perhaps, to countenance this Complaint, *All they that ſee me, laugh me to Scorn, they ſhoot out their Lips, and ſhake their Heads*, Pſal. xxii. 7. but we no where read, in his Hiſtory, that his Enemies ever *pierced his Hands or his Feet*, much leſs that, after they had made an End of him, *they parted his Garments among them, and caſt Lots upon his Veſture.* It was our bleſſed

Saviour

Saviour alone, in whom this Prediction was verified; of him alone, that his Enemies took up this taunting Proverb, and ſaid, *He truſted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he would have* him; to him alone, that theſe Words can, with any tolerable Conſtruction, belong, *Many Oxen are come about me, fat Bulls of* Baſan *cloſe me on every Side, they gape upon me with their Mouths, as it were a rampant and roaring Lion*; as he, indeed, appropriates the whole *Pſalm* to himſelf, when, in his dying Minutes he utters this Citation, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

David, indeed, in all his Troubles, had no Occaſion to make this Lamentation, for tho' the Malice and Perſecutions of *Saul* were upon him, yet he had always abundant Reaſon to ſay of God, *Thou art my ſtony Rock, and my Defence, my Saviour, my God, and my Might; my Buckler, the Horn alſo of my Salvation, and my Refuge:* Therefore *will I follow upon mine Enemies, and overtake them, neither will I turn again till I have deſtroyed them*, Pſal. xviii. 1, 37. His Splendor and Greatneſs, his Victories and Conqueſts, the Reduction of his Foes, and the Enlargement of his Kingdom, made him a proper Emblem of our Saviour's Exaltation and Triumph over our ſpiritual Enemies; but there are few Paſſages in his Life reſemblant of his Sufferings, and none at all that will juſtify this Complaint, *I am poured out like Water, and all my Bones are out of Joint; my Strength is dried up like a Potſherd, and my Tongue cleaveth to my Gums:* So true is that Obſervation of *Grotius*, "That Partiality was the Cauſe of theſe new Ex- "plications among the *Jews*, and that thoſe, "which

" which they formerly received, agreed very " well with the Senſe of *Chriſtians.*"

Upon the Decree of *Cyrus*, for the Reſtoration of the *Jews*, we find *Zorobabel*, among other Princes of the People, ſuperintending Matters, and taking upon him the Government of the Tribe to which he belonged; but that he ſhould be the Perſon intended by *Micah*'s Prophecy, is a Thing impoſſible, becauſe he was not born in *Bethlehem*, which is the Place aſſigned for the Birth of a Ruler, that the Prophet mentions, but in *Babylon*, as his Name imports. That it was eſſentially neceſſary for the *Meſſiah* to be born in *Bethlehem*, and no where elſe, is plain from the Anſwer which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* make *Herod*, upon his conſulting them, and their Quotation of *Micah* for the Proof of it; is plain from the general Notion, which not only the Learned, but the Vulgar, at that Time had imbibed, *viz. That* Chriſt *was to come of the Seed of* David, *and out of the Town of* Bethlehem, *where* David *was born*; and it is plain from the Petition in their Liturgy, wherein they ſtill pray for the Advent of the *Meſſiah*, in theſe Terms: *Shake thyſelf from the Duſt, ariſe, put on thy beautiful Garments, O my People, by the Hand of* Benjeſſe, *the* Bethlemite, *bring Redemption near to my Soul:* So that the Prophecy, in all Reaſon, muſt be applied to the Perſon that was born there, and not to one whoſe Place of Nativity was in a diſtant Country. It is to be obſerved farther, that *Zorobabel* was never any Ruler of *Iſrael*; for tho' he might be at the Head of the Captivity, for ſome Years, yet it was without the Title and Authority of a Governor, and when he had executed his Commiſſion, he

returned to *Babylon*, and there died. But even ſuppoſing he were never ſo much a Governor, it is certainly carrying the Matter too far, to ſay of him, that he *ſhould ſtand and rule in the Strength of the* Lord, *and in the Majeſty of the Lord his God*, Micah. iv. 4. much more is it ſo, to ſay, that *the Going-forth*, or Birth of *this Ruler was of old*, and from the *Days of Eternity* (as the marginal Note has it) which is only applicable to the *Meſſiah*, and in a proper Senſe, only verified in our bleſſed *Saviour, who in Beginning was with God.*

And, in like Manner, if we conſider the Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, in the fifty-third Chapter, and compare them with our Lord's Hiſtory, as the *Evangeliſts* have recorded it, we ſhall ſoon perceive, that they are applicable to none but our bleſſed Saviour only, for (to wave other Arguments that might be drawn from them) with what Propriety of Conſtruction any of theſe Paſſages, *He was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our Iniquities, the Chaſtizement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed*, Iſaiah liii. 4, 5. be applied to the *Jewiſh* Nation? Whenever did we hear that the *Jews* bore the Griefs, and carried the Sorrows of others; that they were wounded for other Men's Tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for Iniquities not their own? The public Calamities, which God, at that Time, ſent upon them, are, by all the Prophets, imputed to their own Sins; but the Perſon here afflicted, is ſaid to have done *no Violence, neither was any Deceit found in his Mouth*; and does this Character ſuit them under any Capacity, or other Sort of Calamity, that the Prophet might have in View?

View? If we will believe him, it is plain that he had another Opinion of them, when, in the very Beginning of his Prophecy, we find him lamenting them, and their Captivity in theſe Words, *Ah ſinful Nation! A People laden with Iniquity, a Seed of Evil-doers, Children that are Corruptors; they have forſaken the Lord, they are gone backwards, wherefore your Country is deſolate, your Cities are burnt with Fire, your Land Strangers devour it in your Preſence, and it is deſolate, as overthrown by Strangers.*

The Sum of our Anſwer is this. If our Saviour and his Apoſtles cannot be ſuppoſed, with any Juſtneſs of Reaſoning, or Proſpect of Succeſs, to alledge Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah*, which the *Jewiſh* Church, at that Time, did not acknowledge to be intended of him; if all the Prophecies, thus alledged, do even yet appear, by ſeveral of their moſt renowned Doctors, to be interpreted of the Meſſiah; if the twenty-ſecond *Pſalm* cannot, with any Propriety of Conſtruction, be applied to *David*; nor the fourth Chapter of *Micah* to *Zorobabel*; nor the fifty-third of *Iſaiah*, to the *Jewiſh* Nation in general; and if good Reaſons may be aſſigned, why the preſent and antient Doctors of the *Jewiſh* Church do differ in the Manner of applying the Predictions of the Prophets; then is the *Chriſtian* Interpretation of them, which appears to be plain and natural, and has Antiquity on its Side, not to be leſs eſteemed, becauſe ſome, out of Partiality and Prejudice, have forced their Wits to invent another.

Nay, even ſuppoſing that there were more Grounds than what hitherto have appeared, to diſpute the Juſtneſs of the Allegation of any Pro-

phecy, yet ſtill we *Chriſtians* muſt aver, that the Application of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles is to be preferred before that of any other, becauſe it was attended with ſuch irreſiſtable Proof of its Truth and Fidelity, and muſt over-bear all Objections to the contrary. For upon a Diſpute of the Application of ſome Paſſage, or a Competition of two different Senſes of the ſame Paſſage, can any Thing in Nature be more deciſive, than the Teſtimony of God? And, can the Teſtimony of God appear by any ſtronger Evidence than by the Power of Miracles, ſupporting the Allegation? God certainly knew the Intention of every Prophecy delivered by his Spirit; and therefore, if *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, when they applied any Prophecy to the *Meſſiah*, gave the beſt Proof that could be given of their being ſent by God, and of their ſpeaking and acting by his Commiſſion, God himſelf muſt be underſtood as confirming their Application. The Authority of the Application, or of the Expoſition, muſt, in ſuch a Caſe, be equal to that of the Prophecy; for there cannot be a better Proof, that the Prophet was ſent from God, than, that the Expoſitor gives of his Miſſion, and the Reaſon of his aſſenting to the one, as well as the other, is on both Sides the ſame.

The Reſult of this whole Enquiry is this, That, ſince our bleſſed Saviour appeals to the Writings of the Prophets, for the Proof of his being the *Meſſiah*, or Meſſenger ſent from God, to deliver his Will to Mankind; and ſince the Marks and Characters which the Prophets give of the *Meſſiah*, are found all to agree and unite in him, according to the Account which the

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Evangeliſts give us of his Life, we have all the Reaſon in the World to believe, that he was really the Perſon he pretended to be, that his Doctrine conſequently is the Word of God, and his Religion; *The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, and hath appeared unto all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World; looking for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great* God, *and our Saviour* Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. III.

From our LORD's Transfiguration *to his laſt Entry into* Jeruſalem.

THE Day following the Lord's Transfiguration (for that Tranſaction was, very probably, in the Night-Time) as he came down from the Mount, he perceived the *Scribes* in deep Debate with the Apoſtles he had left behind him; and while he was enquiring into the Subject of their Diſpute, a certain Man breaking through the Croud, fell proſtrate at his Feet, and beſought him to have

have Pity upon his only Son, a deplorable Object, a Lunatick and poſſeſſed, deaf and dumb, often thrown upon the Ground, and into the Fire and Water, racked with violent Convulſions, accompanied with diſmal Outcries, Foamings, Bruiſes and Torments, and every Way in ſo deſperate a Condition, that his Diſciples, in his Abſence, were not able to cure him. Our Lord, upon hearing of this, was not a little grieved at the Want of Faith in his Diſciples, but ordered the Child to be brought to him. As he was drawing near, the Devil began to rack him with Convulſions, which put the Father in a terrible Fright; and when our Lord commanded the evil Spirit to depart out of the young Man, and never to moleſt him more, after ſome hideous Out-cries, he tore and diſtorted him to ſuch a Degree, that he left him breathleſs on the Ground, ſo that many concluded he was quite dead. But *Jeſus*, taking him by the Hand, lifted him up, and delivered him to his Father perfectly cured, to the great Aſtoniſhment of all the Spectators: And when his Diſciples in private deſired to know the Reaſon why they could not caſt out this Spirit, he imputed it, partly to their Want of Faith, and partly to this Spirit's being of a Kind which was not to be ejected without Faſting and Prayer.

Before we proceed, let us attend to the following Notes on the foregoing Paſſages.

The *Evangeliſts* acquaints us, that while our Saviour was at Prayer on the Mount, St. *Peter and they that were with him, were heavy with Sleep*, Luke ix. 32. which, in ſome meaſure confirms the Conjecture, that the Transfiguration was in the Night; a Time much more proper for the Diſplay of the Luſtre

Luſtre of ſuch an Appearance, than if it had happened in the broad Day-light.

What the Subject-matter of the Debate was, between the *Scribes* and his Diſciples, the *Evangeliſt* have not informed us; but it ſeems not unlikely, that the Scribes were diſputing with the Apoſtles, about their Maſter's ejecting Devils, and the Power, which in that Matter he had conferred upon them, becauſe, in the Caſe before them, they ſaw them nonpluſt, and not able to caſt a Devil out of one, who, in his Abſence, was brought to them. This is the rather probable, not only becauſe our Saviour's diſpoſſeſſing Devils was what gravelled and vexed the *Scribes* and Phariſees more than all his other Miracles, and forced them to the ſorry Refuge of, *He caſts out Devils by* Belzeebub *the Prince of Devils*; but becauſe, upon his coming to the timely Relief of his Apoſtle, and demanded of the *Scribes*, what they were queſtioning and diſputing about it, it immediately follows, *One of the Multitude anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, I have brought unto thee my Son, which hath a dumb Spirit,——And I ſpake to thy Diſciple, that they ſhall caſt him out, and they could not*, Mark ix. 17, 18.

The *Greek* Word tranſlated *Lunatick*, coming from a Word that ſignifies the Moon, anſwers exactly to the *Engliſh Lunatick*, from *Luna*; but there is a Miſtake in rendering it. For, whereas the *Engliſh* Word *Lunatick* is commonly taken for a Madman; ſuch a one eſpecially, whoſe Diſtemper grows worſe towards the Full of the Moon; 'tis plain from all Symptoms, ſuch as being convulſed, foaming at the Mouth, grinding his Teeth, falling into the Fire, and bruiſing and tearing himſelf,

ſelf, *&c.* That the Diſorder under which this Perſon laboured, was an *Epilepſie*, or the *Falling-ſickneſs*. Now the Reaſon why this Diſeaſe is expreſſed by the Word *Lunatick*, is becauſe the Moon has the ſame Influence on it, that it has in Madneſs. Both Diſtempers lie in the Brain, and the Changes of the Moon affect thoſe that are ſubject to the one, as well as the other. When therefore the *Evangeliſts* tell us of this Epileptick, that the Devil took him, that he threw him down, caſt him into a Fit, and made him tear and bruiſe himſelf: The Meaning of all this is, that as, in thoſe Days, it was a common Thing for the Devil to have Power over Men's Bodies, which Power he employed in bringing Diſeaſes upon them: So it was in the preſent Caſe. The Devil that poſſeſſed this young Man, caſt him into frequent Fits of the Falling-ſickneſs (as all Demoniacks, we find, have one Diſtemper or other attending them) of which there was no Way to cure him, but by caſting out the Devil.

The Rebuke which our Saviour utters upon this Occaſion, *O faithleſs and perverſe Generation, how long ſhall I be with you? &c.* Matt. xvii. 17. ſeems to be intended for the whole Company, and every one to have a Share in it, in Proportion to their Deſerts. The Diſciples are not exempted, for they are charged with Infidelity. The Father of the Patient is pointed at, for his Faith was wavering, *Mark* ix. 21, *&c.* And the whole Nation of the *Jews* is included in it, for this was expreſly their Character of old, *A very froward and perverſe Generation, in whom is no Faith*, Deut. xxiii. 5, 20.

Joſephus, who himſelf was a *Phariſee*, and well acquainted with the Notions of every Sect among the

A Scribe is very importunate with Chriſt *to follow him every where*, Matt. 8. 19.

the *Jews*, gives it for a current Opinion, that the Demons, in his and ſome preceding Ages, were nothing elſe but the Souls of wicked Men, who after Death, took Poſſeſſion of the Living; and were continually either afflicting and tormenting, or exciting and ſolliciting them to ſuch Sins as they found were agreeable and complexional to them; and that, according to their different Ways of vexing or tempting thoſe that they poſſeſſed, they had different Appellations given them, an unclean Spirit, a deaf and dumb Spirit, a Spirit of Infirmity, *&c.* In Conformity to this Notion, perhaps it is, that our Saviour here takes Notice of the different Kinds of evil Spirits, and, as among wicked Men, there are different Degrers of Impiety, and ſome are more hardened and profligate than others; ſo he ſeems to intimate, that ſome of theſe Spirits are more deſperate and malicious than others, *Matt.* xii. 45. But all of them obſtinate enough, (might they have their own Option) unwilling to leave the Bodies they have taken Poſſeſſion of. Here they think themſelves ſafe, and, in ſome meaſure, ſcreened from the divine Vengeance; and therefore we find them, at ſometimes crying to our Lord, *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee? Art thou come to torment us*, Matt. viii. 29. And, at others, when commanded to depart, tearing and torturing the Poſſeſſed, and quitting their Habitation, not without much Reluctancy, *Mark* ix. 26. The Apoſtles, no doubt, had adjured this evil Spirit before, in their Maſter's Name, and on ſeveral Occaſions had found the prevailing Power of it, even when their Faith was not ſo well improved, as it was at preſent: And yet, how Faith becomes neceſſary in the Exorciſm of Devils, when we find Strangers doing

it in the Name of *Chriſt*, *Mark* ix. 38. or how the Faith of the Apoſtles came to be defective now, when not many Days before it was ſo very effectual, *Mark* vi. 13. why ſome evil Spirits were Proof againſt the Name of *Chriſt*, whilſt others fled at the bare mention of it; and why ſome ſurrendered at the firſt Summons, while Faſting and Prayer was the only Artillery that could diſlodge others? Theſe, and many more Queſtions that might be raiſed from our Saviour's Words, are Points wherein the beſt Commentators, we have met with, have not once attempted to give us any Satisfaction.

But to go on. From the Mount of Transfiguration, our Lord proceeded in his Journey thro' the other Parts of *Galilee* towards *Capernaum*, and as he was on his Way, he acquainted his Diſciples, the ſecond Time, with his approaching Death and Reſurrection, deſiring them to take good Notice of what he told them; but the Hopes of a temporal Kingdom had ſo intoxicated their Minds, that they found it very difficult to believe or conceive what he ſaid, and yet they were afraid to ask him to explain it.

The Words in the Text are, *They underſtood not this Saying, and it was hid from them*, Luke ix. 45. They underſtood our Saviour's Words, no doubt, and what the Import was of his being delivered into the Hands of Men, and put to death; but then they could not comprehend how their Maſter, whom they knew to be the *Meſſiah*, the Son of God, and whom, conſequently, they believed to be immortal and eternal, could poſſibly be put to death, or ſuffer the Affronts and Outrages of Men. Theſe Notions to them ſeemed incompatible; and therein they conceived

a Myſtery which they could not underſtand: But the modern *Jews* have endeavoured to reconcile theſe two Notions, by inventing the Diſtinction of the *Meſſiah Ben Joſeph*, who was to die, and the *Meſſiah Ben David*, who was to triumph and live for ever.

In the ſame Journey there aroſe a Diſpute among the Apoſtles, which of them ſhould have the chief Place of Dignity in their Maſter's Kingdom; ſtill dreaming of a temporal Sovereignty. This our Saviour by his divine Spirit knew; and therefore, to give an effectual Check to their ambitious Thoughts, he firſt informed them, that the only Way for any Man to become great in his Kingdom, was to be lowly in his own Eſteem; and then calling a little Child, and ſetting him in the Midſt of them, he propoſed him as a Pattern of Meekneſs and Humility, recommended ſuch Children, and in them all humble *Chriſtians*, to the Favour of Mankind; cautioned them againſt doing any Injury, or giving any Offence to ſuch, becauſe of their Guardian Angels; and, to remove the Occaſion of all ſuch Offences, exhorted them to mortify their inordinate Affections, tho' they were to them as an Eye, an Hand, or a Foot, becauſe his heavenly Father, (like a diligent Shepherd, that delights in the Recovery of a ſtray Sheep) was unwilling that any Believer ſhould periſh. Together with theſe Reaſons againſt Scandal and Offences, he preſcribed ſome excellent Rules in Relation to brotherly Reproof, Church Cenſures, and Forgiveneſs of Injuries; and for the Enforcement of this laſt Duty, he propounded the Parable of a certain King, who calling his Servants to Account, found that one of

them owed him an immenſe Sum, no leſs than ten thouſand Talents, which, upon his Inſolvency, and humble Petition, he freely forgave; and yet this very Wretch was no ſooner out of the King's Preſence, than he ſeized upon his Fellow-Servant for a Trifle of a Debt, a Debt of a hundred Pence only, and caſt him into Priſon, even tho' he had uſed the ſame pathetick Intreaties to him, that himſelf had done to the King his Maſter: Which when the King underſtood, he ſent for the ungrateful Villain, upbraided him with his Baſeneſs and Cruelty; and then, in great Rage, ordered him to Priſon, until he ſhould diſcharge the whole Debt. *And ſo likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father* (ſays our Lord in the Application) *deal with ſuch as will not forgive their Brother's Treſpaſſes from their Hearts.*

While he was giving theſe Inſtructions to his Diſciples, he was interrupted by *John*, the Son of *Zebedee*, informing him of a Stranger who caſt out Devils in his Name; but becauſe he was not of their Fraternity, that he had forbidden him; which Conduct *Jeſus* by no Means could approve of, becauſe he looked upon it, as a ſure Argument, that whoever did Miracles in his Name, could be no Enemy to his Perſon.

With this Diſcourſe they arrived at *Capernaum*, where the Collectors of a certain Tribute for the Uſe of the Temple, came to *Peter* and asked him if his Maſter was accuſtomed to pay it? And when *Peter* went in to acquaint him with the Officer's Demands, *Of whom* (ſays our Lord preventing him) *do the Kings of the* Gentiles *take Tribute? Of their Own Children, or of Strangers? Peter* anſwered, *Of Strangers: If ſo* (rejoined our Saviour

Saviour, who well underſtood what the Subject of their Diſcourſe had been, endeavoured, by the Example of a Child, to cure their Diſtemper, and to inform them what Diſpoſition of Mind was proper to qualify them both for his Kingdom of Grace here, and his Kingdom of Glory hereafter. St. *Matthew*, indeed, according to our Tranſlation, repreſents the Thing, as if the Diſciples had put the Queſtion to their Maſter, *Who ſhould be greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*; but that the Participle *perceiving* relates not to *Jeſus*, but to the Diſciples, and means not the external Speech, but the inward Reaſoning of their Minds, is obvious from their Silence, which St. *Mark* takes Notice of, and our Saviour's *perceiving the Thoughts of their Hearts*, which St. *Luke* remarks: For had themſelves propounded the Queſtion to our Saviour (as the Verſion in St. *Matthew* ſeems to imply) we cannot ſee why they ſhould not anſwer his Demand, which tended to the ſame Purpoſe; nor can we imagine, why he ſhould be repreſented, as perceiving the Thoughts of their Hearts, had they already declared theſe Thoughts in plain Words.

The *Apoſtles*, as well as other *Jews*, had imbibed the Notion (which they never got quit of, until the Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt* inſtructed them better) that the *Meſſiah* when he came upon Earth, ſhould erect a temporal Kingdom; and (as the *Jews* in general expect) that they ſhould then be conſtituted Lords over all other Nations; ſo the Apoſtles (who believed their Maſter to be the *Meſſiah*) were naturally led to think, that they ſhould have the Preference before all other *Jews*; and that ſince the King *Meſſiah* (according to the Saviour)

Saviour) *then are the Children free*; meaning, that ſince the *Gentile* Kings did not exact Tribute of their own Houſhold, this Tribute, which was paid to God for his Temple, was not due from him, who was his Son, nor from them who were his Domeſticks; however, to avoid all Occaſions of Offence, he ordered him to go and caſt an Hook into the Sea, and in the Mouth of the firſt Fiſh that he caught, he ſhould find a Piece of Money, juſt of proper Value to give to the Collectors for them: which accordingly came to paſs.

Here let us ſtop to make ſome Remarks on what we have been relating.

There is ſome ſmall Difference in the ſeveral Ways, wherein the *Evangeliſts* have related the Diſpute among the Apoſtles concerning their Preference in *Chriſt*'s Kingdom; St. *Matthew* tells us, that *the Diſciples came to* Jeſus, *ſaying, who is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven?* Chap. xviii. 1. St. *Mark*, that *Chriſt* put this Queſtion to them, *and they held their Peace*, Chap. ix. 33. and St. *Luke*, that they had been diſputing this Point among themſelves, and *Jeſus, perceiving the Thought of their Hearts, took a Child*, &c. Ch. ix. 46, 47 Now, to reconcile this ſeeming Repugnancy, we muſt obſerve, that as our Saviour was going to *Capernaum*, his Diſciples followed him, *diſcourſing among themſelves* (as St. *Mark has it*) *who of them was to be the greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*; that when they came to him into the Houſe, having ſtill the ſame ambitious Notions in their Minds, he asked them, *What was it that you diſcourſed of in the Way?* But they being aſhamed to tell him, held their Peace; and that then our Cuſtom

Cuſtom of other Sovereigns) was to have ſome Officers of the higheſt Rank, they made no Queſtion but that ſome of them ſhould be made choice of, tho' they were not ſo well agreed, who were the fitteſt or moſt deſerving of theſe high Poſts of Honour. Some of them were our Lord's Relations, and others had Parts and Endowments extraordinary; of ſome he had given high Commendations, and others he had admitted to a Participation in his moſt ſecret Retirements. Theſe Things might poſſibly raiſe ſome Emulation among them: And therefore, as our Saviour's Dominion was not of this World, he plainly tells them, that all ſuch worldly Deſires and Expectations were inconſiſtent with the ſpiritual Kingdom which he was to erect, and wherein *he who deſired to be firſt, was to be laſt of all, and Servant of all.*

Some of the Antients are of Opinion, that the Child which *Chriſt* ſet before his Diſciples, as a Pattern of Meekneſs and Humility, was St. *Ignatius*, who was afterwards Biſhop of *Antioch*, and famous in the Chriſtian Church for his writing and dying in the Defence of the Truth. However this be, it is certain that a Child, who has no Concern for Dominion or Empire over others, who is free from all covetous Deſires of Wealth, and knows nothing of what a Poſt of Honour means, was in this Caſe a very proper Emblem of that Simplicity, Innocence and Humility, that our Lord requires in all his Diſciples.

The Words in the Caution are, *Whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe little Ones, which believe in me, it were better for him, that a Millſtone were hanged about his Neck, and that he were drowned in the Sea*, Matt. xviii. 6. To offend or ſcandalize, is to diſcourage Men in the Profeſſion and Practice of Religion,

Religion, and by Indignities and Perſecutions, as well as by bad Examples, to occaſion their apoſtatizing from the Faith: For we can hardly Imagine that ſo ſevere a Puniſhment, as is here threatened, ſhould be inflicted for a Crime of leſs Aggravation than it amounts to: *Grotius*, upon this Place, is of Opinion, that the *Milſtone about the Neck* alludes to a Cuſtom of drowning among the *Syrians*. But St. *Jerome* thinks that this Manner of Execution was in uſe among the *Jews*; for (according to Dr. *Alix*) it was cuſtomary for them to caſt execrable Men into the *Dead-Sea*, with a Stone tied to them. 'Tis certain from *Diodorus Siculus*, and others, that among the *Greeks*, this was the antient Puniſhment for ſacrilegious Perſons; and from *Suetonius* we may learn, that for the Pride and Covetouſneſs, wherewith ſome in publick Offices had oppreſſed the Provinces where they lived, *Auguſtus* had them caſt into the River, with great Weights about their Necks.

With Reſpect to Guardian-Angels, who were ſuppoſed to attend on true *Chriſtians*, it were too nice, perhaps, to ſay that every diſtinct Man has his diſtinct Guardian-Angel: It may be true, ſometimes, that many have but one, and it may be true at other Times, that one has many, as we find *Jacob* had at *Mahanaim*, and *Elias* at *Dothan*; but this we may ſafely affirm, that no good Man is without an Angel to inſpect his Behaviour, and to ſollicit his Well-being. To this Purpoſe *Abraham* tells his Servant, travelling to *Nahor*, *the Lord will ſend his Angel with thee, and proſper thy Way*, Gen. xxiv. 40. and *Jacob* makes mention of one who had redeemed him from all Evil, and wiſhes the ſame Protection to his Children, *Gen.* xlviii. 16. The *Pſalmiſt* gives us expreſs Teſtimony, that the

the *Angel of the Lord ſtandeth round about thoſe that fear him*, Pſal. xxxiv. 7. and that Paſſage, which the Devil applies to our Saviour, *he ſhall give his Angels Charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy Ways*, is delivered by the *Pſalmiſt* as true of every Servant of *Chriſt*, as well as of *Chriſt* himſelf, *for they are all miniſtering Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them, who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation.*

The ten Thouſand Talents mentioned in the Parable of the King's calling his Servants to Account, in our Money, amount to one Million eight hundred and ſeventy-five thouſand Pounds; whereas the hundred Pence, that his Fellow-ſervant was indebted to him, was but about three Pounds two Shillings and Six-pence.

The doctrinal Obſervation, that properly reſults from the Puniſhment of the ungrateful Debtor, mentioned in the ſame Place, is this, That our Sins once forgiven, may, by a Forfeiture of that Pardon by our future Misbehaviour, be again charged upon us; for God's Pardons in this Life are not abſolute, but conditional only: According to the Petition of the Lord's Prayer, they are anſwerable to our Dealings with others; and are likely to be no longer continued to us than we perform the Condition.

That the Man who, as St. *John* informed *Chriſt*, caſt out Devils in his Name, tho' he was not of their Number, did truly caſt them out, our Lord's Anſwer ſuppoſes, and his Diſciples ſaw with their Eyes; but then the Queſtion is, How a Perſon, who did not follow *Chriſt*, could caſt out Devils in his Name? To which it may be anſwered, 1*ſt*, That this Perſon might believe in *Jeſus*,

without being one of his Retinue, and follow his Doctrine, tho' he did not his Perſon. 2*dly*, He might do Miracles in the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*, without being one of his true Diſciples, even as *Judas* is ſuppoſed to have done, and thoſe others, to whom our Lord will profeſs, *I never knew you, depart from me, ye Workers of Iniquity*, Matth. vii. 23. Or, 3*dly*, He might be a Diſciple of *John the Baptiſt*, and ſo do his Miracles in the Name of *Chriſt ſhortly to come*. But by what Means ſoever it was, that he did them, 'tis no ſmall Confirmation of the Truth of *Chriſtianity*, that our Saviour's Name was thus powerful, even among thoſe that did not follow him, and therefore were incapable of doing any Thing by way of Compact with him.

With Reſpect to the Tribute collected for the Uſe of the Temple, every *Jew*, that was twenty Years old, was obliged to pay annually two *Attick Drams*, or half a Shekel (about fifteen Pence, of our Money) for the *Uſe of the Sanctuary*, Exod. xxx. 13, 16. or to buy Sacrifices, and other Things neceſſary for the Service of the Temple: And that this was the Tribute which the Collectors here demanded, and not any Tax payable to the *Roman* Emperors (as ſome imagine) is evident, not only from our Saviour's Argument, *viz.* That he was the Son of that heavenly King, to whom it was paid, and conſequently had a Right to plead his Exemption; but from the *Greek* Word *Didrachma*, which (according to *Joſephus*) was the proper Word for this *Capitation Tax*, that was paid to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*; whereas the *Cæſarean* Tribute-money was the *Denarius*, a *Roman* Coin, and would have been gathered by the uſual Officers, the Publicans, and not by the Perſons, who are here

here ſtiled (as by a known Title) *they, that received the* Didrachma.

The Piece of Money that *Peter* was directed to take out of the Fiſh's Mouth, to pay the Tribute due from them both, amounted to four Drachms, or one Shekel; in our Money, about half a Crown; and the Reaſon, why our Saviour paid for none of the Apoſtles, but St. *Peter* only, was, becauſe theſe Receivers demanded it only of thoſe, that dwelt at *Capernaum* (as our Saviour and St. *Peter* did) leaving the other Apoſtles to pay it in the ſeveral Places of their Abode.

But it is Time to reſume the Narrative.

About this Time the *Feaſt of Tabernacles* drew near; and ſome of our Lord's Relations (out of Vanity more than Good-will) were very earneſt with him to go up to *Jeruſalem*, at this great Concourſe of People, in order to ſhew his Miracles in the Capital, which hitherto (as they ſaid) had been concealed in an obſcure Part of the World: But our Lord, for the preſent, would not yield to their Importunity, tho', in a ſhort Time, he ſet forward to *Jeruſalem*, but in a very private Manner, for fear of awakening the Jealouſy of his Enemies. As he was to paſs through the Province of *Samaria*, he ſent ſome of his Apoſtles to provide him Lodgings in one of the Villages; but the Inhabitants, perceiving that he was going to *Jeruſalem* to the Feaſt, were ſo uncivil, as to refuſe him Entertainment.

This Indignity, put upon their Maſter, ſo exaſperated *James* and his Brother *John*, that they deſired Leave of him (in Imitation of *Elias*) to command Fire down from Heaven, to conſume ſuch inhoſpitable Wretches; but, inſtead of giving any ſuch Permiſſion, our Saviour took care to in-

form them, that the Marks of a *Chriſtian* were Meekneſs and Love, not Fury and Revenge; that the true End and Deſign of his coming into the World *was not to deſtroy, but to ſave Mens Lives*; and, that he might prove this his Doctrine by his holy Practice, when ten leprous Perſons, who came out of the Neighbourhood, where he had been ſo rudely treated, preſented themſelves with loud Cries to him for Help, his Compaſſion was as ready to relieve, as their Neceſſity to ask; for, while they were going *to ſhew themſelves to the Prieſt* (as he directed them) they all found themſelves cured. But, ſee the great Ingratitude of human Nature! of the ten who received this miraculous Bleſſing, but one returned to give our Saviour Thanks, and he was a *Samaritan.*

Having thus returned Good for Evil, and the greateſt Kindneſs for the moſt palpable Affront, our Lord proceeded on his Journey, and came to another Village, where he lodged that Night; but before he arrived at *Jeruſalem* he ſent out ſeventy of his Diſciples, by two and two together, (in the ſame Manner as he had ſent his twelve Apoſtles) into thoſe Places which he himſelf, in a ſhort Time, intended to viſit, and gave them Inſtructions, much of the ſame Import, with what, upon the like Occaſion, he had given his Apoſtles.

The *Feaſt of Tabernacles* always continued eight Days, but, for ſome Time after his Arrival, our Saviour did not appear publickly, which occaſioned no ſmall Enquiry, and various Diſcourſes concerning him; ſome ſaying, that he was a good Man, and others, an Impoſtor, who deluded the People. At length, when every one began to deſpair of

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ſeeing him, about the Middle of the Feaſt he ſhewed himſelf openly, and went and taught in the Temple, to the great Admiration of the *Jews*, who were not a little ſurprized to find him ſo perfect in the Scriptures, whoſe Education had been deſtitute of all Learning: But, to obviate this Exception, he gave them to underſtand, that the Doctrine wherein he inſtructed them, was not of human Acquiſition, but divine Inſpiration; and that it was a very baſe and ungenerous Thing in them, to endeavour to take away the Life of one, who taught them nothing but what was agreeable to the Law of *Moſes*, whereof they made ſo loud a Profeſſion. In this Manner he preached to the People for the remaining Part of the Feaſt; and on the laſt, and greateſt Day thereof, took Occaſion from the Cuſtom of fetching Water from the Fountain of *Siloah* in great Pomp, and pouring it upon the Altar of Burnt-offerings in great Abundance, to acquaint them with the future Effuſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, which he intended to ſend down upon all thoſe that believed in him.

Thoſe, who knew the great Hatred which the ruling Part of the Nation had conceived againſt him, admired to hear him ſpeak with ſo much Freedom and Intrepidity; and thoſe, who had ſeen the Number and Greatneſs of his Miracles, were by them convinced that he was the true *Meſſiah*; but the Prejudice of his being a *Galilean*, and not acknowledged by any of their Rulers and learned Rabbies, led others into a contrary Perſuaſion. In the Concluſion, Officers were ſent from the *Sanhedrim* to apprehend him, but they were ſo taken with his Perſon and Preaching, that they became his Diſciples; for, upon their Return, they

they told the Council, that they could not execute their Office, becauſe *never Man ſpake like him*; ſo that the *Phariſees*, who were Part of the Aſſembly, being more inraged at their Reaſon which they gave, than the Neglect of their Duty, upbraided them for being ſo eaſy ſeduced, and for following the Error of an ignorant Mob; until *Nicodemus*, who had formerly converſed with our Lord, and was indeed a ſecret Diſciple of his, ſeeing with what Violence his Enemies were bent againſt him, could not forbear interpoſing in his Behalf, by urging the Unlawfulneſs of condemning a Perſon without hearing; ſo that, after ſome Reflections thrown upon him, as a Favourer of this *Galilean*, who could have no Pretenſions (as they ſaid) to the Title of a Prophet, the Aſſembly broke up; without proceeding any farther againſt him, becauſe indeed, as yet *his Time was not fully come.*

Some Remarks may now be thought neceſſary on the foregoing Relation.

The Feaſt of Tabernacles, kept in Commemoration of the *Iſraelites* ſojourning in the Wilderneſs, and living in Tents for the Space of forty Years, was one of the three great annual Feſtivals, wherein all the Males were obliged to appear at *Jeruſalem*. It began to be celebrated on the fifteenth Day of the Month *Tizri* (which anſwers in part to our *September* and *October*) and is the firſt Month in their *civil*, and the ſeventh in their *ſacred* Year.

Our Saviour's Words upon this Occaſion are,—*Ye go up unto this Feaſt, I go not up yet to this Feaſt, for my Time is not yet fully come*, Joh. vii. 8. Here *Grotius* takes Notice, that the *Greek* Particle which

which anſwers to *not yet*, was not originally in the Text, becauſe (according to St. *Jerom*, contra *Pelag.* lib. ii.) *Porphyry* accuſes *Chriſt* of Inconſtancy and Mutability, in ſaying, *I go not up to the Feaſt*, when afterwards he went; and therefore he very modeſtly concludes, that this Particle was added by ſome *Chriſtians*, to avoid the Force of this Objection. But why muſt *Chriſtians* be accuſed of altering the Scriptures, merely to ſave the Credit of an *Heathen*, and profeſſed Enemy to *Chriſtianity*, who might either read negligently, or meet with a deficient or corrupt *Latin* Copy? Eſpecially ſince it is certain, that St. *Chryſoſtom* reads this Particle; that the *Syriac*, and *Arabic* Verſions, the *Alexandrian*, and moſt other ancient *Manuſcripts*, have it; and that it intirely agrees with the Senſe both of the preceding and ſubſequent Words.

Samaria was a Province that lay between *Galilee* and *Judea*, and our Saviour's neareſt Way to *Jeruſalem* was through it. But then it may be queſtioned, why the *Samaritans*, who lived at leſs Diſtance from *Jeruſalem* than the *Galileans*, came to be more corrupted in their Religion? To which the moſt probable Anſwer is,——That when the King of *Aſſyria* had taken *Samaria*, and carried away the People captive, 2 *Kings* xvii. 6. in their Room he planted Colonies of his own Subjects, who were groſs Idolaters; and more eſpecially in the Country of *Samaria*, properly ſo called, becauſe it was a Province which lay in the Heart of his new Conqueſt, and might therefore keep the others, that depended on it, in Subjection. Now theſe Idolaters mixing with the *Jews* that were left behind, made up a ſtrange Medley of Religion, which was not quite reformed, even in our Savi-

our's

our's Time; and therefore he tells the *Samaritan* Woman, at *Jacob*'s Well, *Ye worſhip ye know not what*, John iv. 22. whereas the People of *Galilee*, having few of the *Aſſyrians* planted among them, kept their Religion more pure and unmixed, and, after the Deſtruction of the Temple of *Gerizim* by *John Hyrcanus*, held conſtant Communion with the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, even tho' *Gabinius*, when he was Governor of *Syria*, had built the *Samaritans* another; and in Relation to this Communion it is, that our Saviour tells the ſame Woman (ſpeaking of himſelf, among other *Galileans*) *we know what we worſhip, for Salvation is of the* Jews.

The great Multitude that accompanitd our Saviour, and the little or no Proviſion that he uſually carried with him, made it neceſſary for ſome to go before to make Preparation for his Reception; and his two Apoſtles, *James* and *John*, are ſuppoſed to be the Perſons imployed in this Capacity, becauſe we find them in particular reſenting the Indignity put upon their Maſter.

Joſephus tells us,———That as it was an uſual Thing for the *Galileans* to travel by the Way of *Samaria* to *Jeruſalem*, upon the Celebration of their Feſtivals, one Time as they paſſed by a Village called *Nais*, under the Juriſdiction of *Samaria*, and ſituated in the *great Plain*, there happened a Quarrel between the Paſſengers and Villagers, wherein ſeveral of the *Galileans* were ſlain, and which afterwards occaſioned a Civil War between theſe two Provinces.——And as it was a common Thing for the *Samaritans* to be angry with the *Galileans* in general, for paſſing by their Temple to go to *Jeruſalem*, ſo they might much more reſent it in our Saviour, becauſe, as he was accounted a *Prophet ſent from God*, by this Action he plainly decided

Matthew sitting at the Receipt of Custom, is called by **Christ** *to follow him* **Matt. 9. 9.**

decided the Controverſy between them and the *Jews*, touching the Place which God had appointed for his religious Worſhip.

The Hiſtory of *Elias* (to which the Apoſtles refer us) is doubtleſs that, where, by the Direction of God, he called for *Fire from Heaven* to deſtroy thoſe Captains and their Companies, whom King *Ahaziah* ſent out to apprehend him, 2 *Kings* 1. 10, *&c.* And when theſe two Apoſtles deſired the like Judgment upon the Village of *Samaria*, for refuſing to receive their Maſter, they verified the Name of being *Sons of Thunder*, which, upon Account of their fiery Zeal, their Maſter had before given them, *Mark* iii. 17.

What the two Apoſtles had to alledge, in Behalf of their intended Severity againſt theſe *Samaritans* was, That they were Schiſmaticks, and had ſet up another Temple in Oppoſition to that at *Jeruſalem*; that they were Hereticks, and, together with the Worſhip of the God of *Iſrael*, had mixed that of *Pagan* Idols; that the Perſon, whom they had affronted, had a Character much ſuperior to that of *Elias*; and that, by an exemplary Puniſhment, inflicted on this Village, they might convince the reſt of the *Samaritans* of God's Diſpleaſure againſt their Way of Worſhip, and of the divine Miſſion of their Maſter, who was the true *Meſſiah*. But, notwithſtanding theſe plauſible Allegations, our Saviour rebuked them; and, in his Rebuke, gave them to underſtand, that a Spirit of Severity towards erroneous Perſons, in whomſoever it is found, is highly oppoſite to the calm Temper of *Chriſtianity*, which is *pure and peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be intreated, full of Mercy, and good Works*, James iii. 17. and that it was repugnant to the End for which he came into the

World, which was to diſcountenance all Fierceneſs and Rage, and furious Zeal, that occaſion ſo many Miſchiefs among Mankind, and to beget in all his Followers ſuch a Diſpoſition, as exerts itſelf in *Love*, *Peace*, *Long-ſuffering*, *Gentleneſs*, *and Meekneſs*, Gal. v. 22, 23. even to thoſe, of the moſt contrary Tempers and Perſuaſions.

By the *Prieſts*, to whom our Saviour remits the *Lepers*, we are to underſtand the *Prieſts* at *Jeruſalem*; for we can hardly ſuppoſe, that he would ſend them to thoſe of Mount *Gerizim*; when himſelf, both in his Words and Practice, had ſufficiently declared the Illegality of their Inſtitution: And therefore, by ſending them to *Jeruſalem*, where they were to make their Offerings for their Cleanſing, *Lev.* xiv. 2, *&c.* he not only decided the Controverſy between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, but gave them likewiſe to underſtand, that, before they reached *Jeruſalem*, he would undoubtedly heal them.

Thoſe, who would have it, that the *ſeventy* Diſciples, whom *Chriſt* ſent out, were choſen according to the Number of the *Sanhedrim*, imagine, that they were *ſeventy-two*, tho' the round Sum only be mentioned; but the general Teſtimony of the Ancients is, that they were no more than *ſeventy*. What their Names were, is a Thing unknown, only we have an uncertain Account of twenty-eight of them out of *Euſebius*, *Epiphanius*, and *Papias*, and theſe are, *Matthias*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *Barnabas*, *Stephen*, *Philip*, *Procorus*, *Nicanor*, *Timon*, *Parmenas*, *Nicholas*, *Juſtus*, *Apelles*, *Soſthenes*, *Rufus*, *Niger*, *Cephas*, *Thaddæus*, *Ariſtion*, *John*, *Barſabas*, *Andronicus*, *Junius*, *Silas*, *Lucius*, *Manaen*, *Mnaſon*, and *Ananias*. Now, whereas ſome

compare the *Biſhops* to the *Apoſtles*, and theſe *ſeventy* to the *Presbyters* of the Church, and thence conclude, that theſe two Orders in the Miniſtry, one inferior to the other, were inſtituted by *Chriſt* himſelf, there is this Difference in the Matter, That the *ſeventy* received not their Miſſion (as *Presbyters* do) from *Biſhops*, but immediately from our Lord, as the Apoſtles did, and were ſent upon the ſame Errand, and with the ſame Powers. There is, however, I think, this Foundation for that, wherein St. *Chryſoſtom*, and others, place the Superiority of *Biſhops* over *Presbyters*, *viz.* that the Power of Ordination belongs to them alone: For, tho' the Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel belonged to the *ſeventy*, as well as to the *twelve Apoſtles*, yet the Power of conferring the *Holy Ghoſt* by the Impoſition of Hands, was peculiar to the *twelve*, *Acts* viii. 14, *&c.* and this ſeems to be the Reaſon, why the conferring of the *Holy Ghoſt*, for the Uſe of the Miniſtry (which is done by the Impoſition of Hands) has perpetually been eſteemed peculiar to the *Biſhops*, who, in the eccleſiaſtical Stile, are always called the *Succeſſors* of the *Apoſtles*.

From the twenty ninth Chapter of the Book of *Numbers* we learn, that on the firſt Day of the *Feaſt of Tabernacles*, thirteen Bullocks were to be offered; on the ſecond, twelve; on the third, eleven; on the fourth, ten; on the fifth, nine; on the ſixth, eight; on the ſeventh, ſeven; and on the eighth, or laſt, only one; ſo that, in regard to the Sacrifices, the laſt Day was the leaſt of all, and yet the *Jews* accounted it the greateſt, becauſe on that Day the King of *Iſrael* (as the *Talmudiſts* love to ſpeak) was entertained by his own People only, and not by thoſe of any other Nation. For their Tradition is, that, on the firſt

Day of the Feaſt, their Anceſtors (when the Temple was ſtanding) ſacrificed ſeventy Bullocks for the ſeventy Nations (for they ſuppoſe juſt ſo many) that are upon the Face of the Earth; but on the laſt Day no more than one, but that in the Name of the People of *Iſrael* only. And, as they imagine, that an earthly Prince may ſometimes (inſtead of a vaſt Entertainment) deſire but a ſmall Collation with his firſt Favourite, that they may have an Opportunity of ſome familiar Converſe together; ſo, upon the Account of the intimate Friendſhip with God, which the *Jews*, on that Day, thought themſelves admitted to, and the exceſſive Joy, which, from the Senſe of that Friendſhip, they expreſſed in all the outward Significations of Muſick, Singing, and Dancing, the laſt Day of the Feaſt of Tabernacles was always accounted the greateſt.

In theſe Words, *never Man ſpoke like him*, there are two Things remarkable, *1ſt*, The Power of *Chriſt*'s Preaching to change the Frame and Temper of Mens Spirits; for theſe Men came with Hearts alienated from *Chriſt*, and with Intention to apprehend, and carry him before the Chief-prieſts, but returned with great Admiration of his Excellency and Worth. *2dly*, The Honeſty and Integrity of theſe Men is very remarkable; for they do not return with a Pretence that they feared the Multitude, and therefore thought it dangerous to apprehend him, but ingenuouſly confeſs, that they could not prevail with themſelves to lay violent Hands upon a Perſon whoſe Diſcourſes were ſo excellent and divine.

Our bleſſed Saviour was neither by Birth, nor by Deſcent, a *Galilean*; but, admitted he had been

ſo,

ſo, 'twas a falſe Aſſertion to ſay, that no Prophet ever aroſe out of *Galilee*, ſince *Nahum*, tho' originally of the Tribe of *Simeon* (according to the Teſtimony of St. *Jerom*, was himſelf a *Galilean*) was born in that Province, and in *Elciſt*, the ſame Town which that Father came from; ſince *Jonas* was undoubtedly of *Gath-hepher*, in the Tribe of *Zebulon*, which lay in the Land of *Galilee*, 2 Kings xiv. 25. and, in the Opinion of ſeveral, *Malachi* was of the ſame Tribe, and born in the City of *Sapha*: For, as there is no Reaſon in Nature, ſo is there no Declaration of the divine Will, why a *Galilean* ſhould not be inſpired with the Gift of Prophecy, as well as any other *Jew*.

Some are of Opinion, that the Party of *Sadducees* in the Council, who held the Rites and Traditions of the *Phariſees* in great Contempt, joined with *Nicodemus*, in not having *Chriſt* condemned without a fair Hearing, which was no more, than what the Law required. *Deut.* i. 16, 17.

The next Part of the ſacred Story follows thus:

In the Evening, *Jeſus* repaired to the Mount of *Olives*, about a Mile from the City, and where he ſometimes uſed to paſs the Night with his Apoſtles. Early next Morning he returned to the Temple, and, as he was teaching the People that were gathered about him, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* brought in a Woman taken in the Act of Adultery, and deſired him to give his Judgment in the Caſe. Their Purpoſe was to find an Occaſion of accuſing him, either of aſſuming a judicial Power, if he condemned her; or of annulling the Law, if he acquitted her: But he (as if he had not much minded them) ſtooped down and wrote ſomething with his Finger upon the Duſt of the Pavement; till, upon their importuning him for an Anſwer,

he

he raiſed himſelf up, and ſaid, *He that is without Sin among you, let him caſt the firſt Stone*; and ſo ſtooping down, wrote as before. This unexpected Anſwer baffled theſe inſidious Accuſers; who, throughly convinced of their own Crimes, retired, one by one, and left the Woman alone; ſo that, when our Lord lift himſelf up, and found none but the Woman ſtanding by him, he asked her, what was become of her Accuſers, and whether any one had condemned her? And, when he underſtood, by her Anſwer, that no one had, *Neither do I condemn thee*, ſaid he, *go, and ſin no more.*

After this Interruption, *Jeſus* returned to the Buſineſs of inſtructing the People, and, in a ſublime Diſcourſe, opened ſeveral great Myſteries of Chriſtianity, *viz.* his divine Miſſion, his Coequality with the Father, his Ability to give eternal Life to his Followers, and the Neceſſity of believing in him, which would be more evident after his Crucifixion; and thence taking Occaſion to expoſe the Wickedneſs and Degeneracy of thoſe, who ſought to take away his Life, and how unlike to the Behaviour of the Sons of God and *Abraham* (whom they boaſted themſelves to be) ſuch cauſeleſs and inveterate Malice was, he ſo provoked them with his ſevere Reflections, and eſpecially with the Superiority which he claimed above *Abraham*, that they took up Stones to caſt at him, had he not miraculouſly conveyed himſelf out of their Hands.

Before our Lord left *Jeruſalem*, the *ſeventy* Diſciples, whom he had ſent to preach the Goſpel, returned from their Journey and Miniſtry, greatly rejoicing, becauſe the very Devils, by Virtue of his Name, were ſubjected to them; whereupon our Lord promiſed them ſtill greater Succeſs; inveſted them

them with Power to tread upon the moſt venomous Beaſts, and all the malignant Inſtruments of *Satan*, without the leaſt Harm; and, at the ſame Time, gave them Aſſurance of a Bleſſing more peculiarly theirs, *viz.* that their Names were recorded in Heaven; and ſo broke out into a Rapture of Joy, glorifying God for concealing the Myſteries of the Goſpel from the Great and Wiſe, and revealing them to the Simple and Ignorant; and to his Diſciples more eſpecially, who, in Virtue of that Revelation, enjoyed an Happineſs which many Kings and Prophets had in vain deſired.

Our Lord had ſcarce ended his Diſcourſe, when a Doctor of the Law ſtood up, and enquired of him, what was neceſſary to be done for the Attainment of that eternal Life, which he was ſo very liberal in promiſing to his Followers. Whereupon our Lord remitted him to the Law, which, according to the Doctor's own Account, conſiſted chiefly in the Love of God, and the Love of our Neighbour. But when he demanded farther, what the Notion of a Neighbour implied? our Lord thought proper to anſwer this Queſtion by telling him,——"That, once upon a Time, a certain *Jew*, as he was travelling in the Road between *Jeruſalem* and *Jericho*, was robbed, ſtripped, barbarouſly uſed, and left almoſt dead with his Wounds; that by Chance a Prieſt came that Way, and ſaw the poor Wretch weltering in his Blood, but the Horror of the Sight did not affect him, he paſſed along unconcerned; that next came a *Levite*, but he too was as void of Tenderneſs and Compaſſion as was the Prieſt, tho' both of them were of the ſame Country with the Sufferer; that, at laſt, a *Samaritan*, a Stranger, and one ab-

abhorred by the *Jews*, ſeeing this diſtreſſed Perſon, with great Compaſſion came to him, raiſed his Head, recalled his fainting Spirits, and cloſed his gaping Wounds with the beſt Medicines he had; then, mounting him on his own Horſe, he gently conveyed him to the firſt Inn, where, at his own Coſt, he entertained him, while he ſtaid with him, and, at his Departure, promiſed the Hoſt to be at whatever Expences more ſhould happen." From this plain Narration, the Doctor himſelf could not but conclude, that the *Samaritan* was the Neighbour to the Perſon in Diſtreſs, and conſequently, that the Notion of a Neighbour comprehended Men of all Nations, and all Religions whatever.

Let us now ſtop to take a Review of this Period of our Narration.

It is generally agreed, that, when our Saviour ſtooped down to write with his Finger in the Duſt, he wrote ſome memorable Sentence or other, but what that Sentence was, the Conjectures of learned Men have been various. Some have imagined, that it was the Reproof againſt a rigid and uncharitable Temper, which occurs in his Sermon on the Mount, *Why beholdeſt thou the Mote that is thy Brother's Eye, but conſidereſt not the Beam that is in thine own Eye?* Matth. vii. 3. others, that it was the very Words, which, upon his raiſing himſelf up, he pronounced to the Woman's Accuſers, *He, that is without Sin among you, let him firſt caſt a Stone at her*, John viii. 7. and others again, that it might rather be that Paſſage in the Pſalmiſt, *Unto the Ungodly ſaith God, Why doſt thou preach my Laws, and takeſt my Covenant in thy Mouth? Whereas thou hateſt to be reformed,*

Christ *asleep in the Ship in the midst of a Storm awakes and Rebukes it*, Matt. 8. 24.

he had made Choice of his, rather than any other, to eat the *Paſchal* Supper in.

The *Greek* Word in this Place tranſlated *Comforter*, whom our Lord promiſed to ſend them after his Departure, ſignifies both an Advocate and Comforter; and the *Holy Spirit*, when he deſcended upon the Apoſtles, did the Part of an Advocate, by confirming their Teſtimony by Signs and Miracles, and various Gifts imparted to them, and by pleading their Cauſe before Kings and Rulers, and againſt all their Adverſaries; and he did the Part of a Comforter likewiſe, as he was ſent for the Conſolation of the Apoſtles, and all ſucceeding *Chriſtians*, in all their Troubles, filling their Hearts with Joy and Gladneſs, and giving them an inward Teſtimony of God's Love to them, together with an Aſſurance of their future Happineſs.

What Interpreters ſay of Diſeaſes healed by the *Shadow* of *Peter*, and by a *Napkin* ſent from St. *Paul*, and of Miracles performed throughout the World, and, for the Space of three whole Centuries, Devils ejected every-where, is not unfitly mentioned here, as anſwering to our Saviour's Words; and yet, we cannot but think, that this ſhould chiefly be referred to the wonderful Succeſs of the *Goſpel* preached by the Apoſtles, after the Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt* upon them; to the Gift of Tongues, and the Interpretation of them; of Prophecy, and diſcerning of Spirits; and the imparting theſe Gifts to others, by Baptiſm, and the Impoſition of the Apoſtles Hands. For, as this was a greater Work in our bleſſed Saviour to aſſiſt ſo many with his mighty Power, when abſent at ſo great a Diſtance, as the Earth is from Heaven, than to do Miracles in their Preſence;

ſo to communicate theſe Gifts to Men, and to enable them to transfer them to others, is the evident Effect of a ſuper-natural and omnificent Cauſe, and eſpecially, when our Lord ſucceeded ſo little in his three Years preaching here on Earth, and had ſo few ſincere Diſciples, that he ſhould enable his Apoſtles, at one Sermon, to convert ſome Thouſands, and cauſe his Goſpel to fly like Lightning through the World, and beat down all the ſtrong Holds of Oppoſition; this is truly wonderful.

Proceed we now in our Narrative.

As ſoon as he had ended this Diſcourſe, he aroſe, and with his Diſciples, going towards *Jeruſalem*, arrived at the Place where they were to eat the *Paſchal Lamb*. In the Evening, when it grew dark, they ſat down to the Table in a leaning Poſture; and, as he began to renew the Diſcourſe, *that one in the Company ſhould certainly betray him, but that better it had been for the Man, who did ſo, if he had never been born*, the Concern and Sadneſs was ſo general, that every one began to enquire for himſelf, whether he was the Man? Until it came to *Judas*'s Turn, who, having the Confidence to ask the Queſtion, received a poſitive Anſwer, *That he was*: Whereupon he ſoon withdrew from his Maſter, and adjoined himſelf to his Enemies, who were impatiently expecting the Performance of his Promiſe.

When the *Paſchal Supper* was ended, our Saviour proceeded to the Inſtitution of another, in Commemoration of his own Death and Paſſion. For he took Bread, and when he had bleſſed it, and broke it, he diſtributed it to his Apoſtles, calling it his Body; and, after he had ſo done, he took the Cup of Wine, and having, in like Manner

ner bleſſed it, he gave it among them, calling it his *Blood of the new Covenant*, and commanding them *to do the ſame*, i. e. to eat Bread and drink Wine in this ſacramental Manner, even unto the End of the World, *in Remembrance of him.*

After this Inſtitution of the Form of that Memorial, which his Apoſtles, and their Poſterity were to continue, he gave them to underſtand, that this was the laſt *Paſchal Supper*, which he ſhould eat, and the laſt Wine that he ſhould drink with them, until *he drank it new in the Kingdom of God:* From which Words ſome of his Apoſtles inferring, that tho' his Kingdom was not to be then, yet it would not fail to commence immediately after his Reſurrection, they fell into unreaſonable Contentions about Priority, or who ſhould have the Office of the higheſt Truſt and Honour about their Maſter, which our Lord endeavoured to repreſs, by the ſame Arguments that he had employ'd upon the like Occaſion: And then turning to *Peter*, he apprized him of the imminent Danger, which he and his Brethren were in, and what a ſevere Trial the great Enemy of Mankind would very ſpeedily bring upon them, to whom *Peter*, in Confidence of his own Courage and Reſolution, anſwered for himſelf, that *he was ready to go with him to Priſon, and to Death*; but our Saviour, who beſt knew his Weakneſs, gave him to underſtand, that *before the Crowing of the Cock he ſhould deny him thrice.*

After this, our Lord, in his final Exhortation to his Apoſtles, reminded them of the Choice which he had made of them, and the kind Treatment, which he had all along ſhewn them; and that therefore it was their Duty, and their Intereſt

both, to adhere to him, *as the Branch did to the Vine*, in order to bring forth the *Fruits of Righteouſneſs*, and to continue immoveable in the Profeſſion of his Religion, notwithſtanding all the Perſecutions they ſhould meet with, which, indeed, would prove ſo violent and outrageous, that Men would think they did God Service in killing them. This, however, ſhould not utterly deject them, becauſe his Abſence from them would not be long. His Death was but to uſher in his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion; and the Benefit, which would accrue to them from theſe, *viz.* in the Miſſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, to be their Guide and Comforter, in his own Interceſſion for them at God's Right-Hand, and in their Prayers and Supplications, which (if offered up in his Name) would not fail of Admittance to the Throne of Grace, would abundantly compenſate the Want of his Preſence: And *therefore I have told you theſe Things*, ſays he, *that in me ye might have Peace: In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.*

Theſe comfortable Exhortations to his Apoſtles, were attended with a ſolemn Prayer and Interceſſion to Almighty God; for himſelf, that as he had executed the Commiſſion, for which he came into the World, he might be reinſtated in the ſame Glory, which he had with his Father from Eternity; for his Apoſtles, that they might live in brotherly Love and Unity, be preſerved in all Dangers, and ſanctified in their Minds and Converſations; and for all ſucceeding Chriſtians, that they might continue in the Communion of the Saints here, and be admitted to the Sight and Participation of his Glory and Felicity hereafter:

And,

And, having concluded all with an Hymn, which he and his Apoſtles ſung together, he left the City, and paſſing over the Brook *Cedron*, came to a Place called *Gethſemane*, where there was a Garden well known to *Judas*, becauſe thither our Lord and his Apoſtles uſed frequently to repair, both for Retirement and Devotion.

As they were going to this Place, our Lord, with mighty Concern, began to tell them, that, that very Night the Prophecy of *Zechariah*, concerning *the Shepherd's being ſmitten, and the whole Flock diſperſed*, would be fulfilled in his and their Perſons, foraſmuch as every one of them upon the Diſtreſs that was going to befal him, would flee away from him, and forſake him. This *Peter* thought a Diſparagement to his Courage, and therefore aſſured our Lord, that, *tho' all Mankind ſhould forſake him, yet would not he*; and being told again, that he would certainly deny him before the Time of *Cock-crowing*, with the utmoſt Vehemence he affirmed, that *tho' he ſhould die, he would not deny him*; and the like Profeſſion of undaunted Adherence made all the Reſt.

When they were come to the Garden, our Lord ordered the Reſt of his Apoſtles to tarry for him, at a certain Place, whilſt himſelf, with the three that were moſt intimate with him, *viz.* *Peter*, *James* and *John*, retired a while to his private Devotions; as they were going along, he required them to join their Prayers with his, that they might not be delivered over to Temptation. But they were not gone above the Diſtance of a Stone's Caſt, before he found his Spirits depreſſed, and his Soul *ſadly ſorrowful, even unto Death*; which, when he had diſcovered to the three Apoſtles, and deſired them to watch with him a lit-

tle, in this trying and momentous Juncture, he withdrew from them; and then throwing himſelf proſtrate on the Ground, begged of God, *That, if it was poſſible* (as all Things were poſſible to him) *he might be excuſed from drinking the bitter Potion, whoſe black Ingredients filled him with Horror and Amazement; nevertheleſs in this he ſubmitted himſelf intirely to his divine Pleaſure:* And, having prayed to this Effect, he returned to his Apoſtles, but finding them aſleep, he awaked them, and, in a Reproof full of Love, reminded *Peter* more eſpecially, of his late Promiſes and preſent Neglect of him, when he moſt of all ſtood in Need of his Comfort and Aſſiſtance. He adviſed him, therefore, to keep himſelf awake, for fear of the Temptations that were buſy about him, and added this compaſſionate Obſervation; that tho' *the Spirit was willing*, and ready enough to make good Reſolutions, yet *the Fleſh was weak*, and unable, very often to put them in Execution.

Thrice did our bleſſed Lord retire and pray in this Manner; but in the laſt Time his Senſe of God's Indignation againſt the Sins of Mankind, and the diſmal Proſpect of what he was to ſuffer in the Expiation of them, made his Prayer more Vehement, and his Agonies ſo violent, that the Sweat, which fell from his Body, was like large Drops of Blood; and human Nature muſt have been exhauſted under it, had not an Angel from Heaven been immediately ſent to ſtrengthen and ſupport him. With this Recruit he returned the third Time to his Apoſtles; but finding them ſtill in the ſame ſleepy Condition, he told them, that now they might ſleep on, as long as they pleaſed, becauſe he had no farther Occaſion for their Aſſiſtance; that, however, it would not be improper

for

for them to ariſe, becauſe the Traitor, who was to deliver him up to the *Gentiles*, was juſt at Hand. Nor were the Words well out of his Mouth, before *Judas*, accompanied with a Band of Soldiers and Officers, together with ſome of the chief Prieſts, *Phariſees* and Elders of the People, all armed with Swords and Staves, came to apprehend him.

To prevent all Miſtakes, the Traitor had given them a Sign, that the Perſon whom he ſhould kiſs, was the Man they were to apprehend; and therefore approaching our Lord, with an Addreſs of ſeeming Civility, he ſaluted him, and in Return received a Reproof of his Perfidy, but in ſuch gentle and eaſy Terms, as ſpoke a Mind perfectly calm and undiſturbed; and then ſtepping forward, with an Air of Majeſty, our Lord demanded of the Soldiers, *whom they wanted*? They told him, *Jeſus of Nazareth*. He replied, that he was the Perſon: But when they were going to lay rude Hands upon him, the impetuous Rays of Glory, which darted from his divine Face, ſtruck ſo fiercely upon their Eyes, that they fell to the Ground. However, inſtead of taking the Advantage of their Conſternation, to make his Eſcape (as he had done at other Times) he again demanded of them, *who it was they wanted?* And when they again made him the ſame Anſwer, he told them, That if he was the Perſon, he expected that his Diſciples ſhould depart unmoleſted.

When the Multitude began to lay Hands on *Jeſus*, ſome of his Apoſtles, having Swords with them, asked their Maſter, if they might draw in his Defence: But, before they had his Anſwer, *Peter* had drawn his Sword, and, in great Fury ſtruck

ſtruck at *Malchus*, one of the High-prieſt's Servants, with a Deſign to cleave his Head, though he happened only to cut off his Right-Ear. Our Saviour, however, rebuking his intemperate Zeal, commanded him to put up his Sword, becauſe he had no Occaſion for any human Aid, who had Legions of Angels at his Command; and then, having cured the Man's Ear with a Touch, he turned about, and expoſtulated with the Soldiery, the Indignity of apprehending him in ſo ſcandalous a Manner, as if he were a Thief, or ſome vile Malefactor, when they had daily an Opportunity of taking him in the Temple. But, ſay what he would it availed nothing. They immediately bound him, and led him away.

The Apoſtles now, ſeeing their Maſter thus treated, loſt all their Courage, and (as he had foretold them) left him, and took themſelves to flight. For ſuch was the Violence of the Soldiers, that ſeeing a young Man following the Company, with nothing but a Night-gown on, and ſuppoſing him to be one of our Lord's Diſciples, they laid hold on him; but he, by quitting his Garment, ſlipped out of their Hands, and fled away naked.

Being come to this Period of our Hiſtory, ſome Remarks thereon may be thought proper.

At the firſt Inſtitution of the *Paſchal Supper*, the *Iſraelites* were commanded to eat it in a ſtanding Poſture, and in haſte; but here we find our Saviour and his Apoſtles eating it lying down, or inclining on their Left-Side, as it was then the Manner of the *Jews*. When, or upon what Account, this Alteration came to be made, we have no other Information, than what we find in the Writings

them and the Scribes, the Teachers of the Law, with their Pride and Prevarication, their Hypocriſy and Spirit of Perſecution, he ſo exaſperated them, that they uſed all poſſible Methods to enſnare him in his Speech, and to find ſome Accuſation againſt him, whereby they might deſtroy him.

One of the Company, however, ſeeing with what Authority he reproved, and determined among the People, deſired of him to arbitrate between him and his Brother, concerning an Eſtate which had lately fallen to them: But this Office he choſe to decline, and thence took Occaſion to preach againſt Covetouſneſs, or placing our Felicity in worldly Poſſeſſions; and, to enforce this, he propounded the Parable of a certain rich Man, who, when he had acquired Eſtate enough, propoſed to indulge himſelf in Voluptuouſneſs, but was ſadly diſappointed by the Intervention of a ſudden Death: He therefore exhorted his Diſciples not to be too anxious about the Things of this Life, but to caſt their Care upon God's Providence, who, having promiſed them a Kingdom in Heaven, would not fail of ſupplying them with what was neceſſary here. He exhorted them alſo to Charity, to Watchfulneſs, to Preparation againſt the Day of Judgment, or the Arreſt of Death, and (under the Emblem of Stewards, or Governors in great Mens Houſes) recommended Gentleneſs and Temperance, and cautioned them againſt indulging themſelves in any kind of Exceſs, upon the Confidence of their Lords Abſence or Delay.

While he was thus diſcourſing to his Diſciples, News was brought him of the Maſſacre, which *Pilate* had cauſed to be made of ſome *Galileans*, while they were offering their Sacrifices at the Altar; and the Conſequence which he drew from

thence (as well as from another ſad Accident, that had lately happened in *Jeruſalem*, where the Fall of the Tower of *Siloam* had deſtroyed no leſs than eighteen Perſons) was, not that theſe Sufferers were greater Sinners than their Neighbours, but that their Sufferings were intended to lead others to Repentance, which if they did not, in all Probability they would meet with the like or worſe Judgments: And then, to engage them all to a ſpeedy Repentance; he ſet forth the Patience of the Almighty towards them, in the Parable of a Fig-tree, which the Maſter of the Vineyard ordered to be cut down, becauſe, for three Years, it had born no Fruit; but the Gardener promiſing to uſe a more than ordinary Care and Diligence about it, prevailed with him to let it ſtand one Year longer, however, with this Determination, that, if it ſtill continued unfruitful, he would then deſtroy it.

A few Notes on the foregoing Paſſages are here neceſſary.

Interpreters have given themſelves ſome Trouble in determining what that *one Thing* is, which our Saviour accounts *needful*. Some of the Ancients are of Opinion, that our Lord, in this Expreſſion, told *Martha*, that *one Diſh was enough*. But, beſides the Lowneſs of the Senſe, the great Company that attended our Lord, ſeventy Diſciples, and twelve Apoſtles, to be ſure, if no more, ſhews the Incongruouſneſs of this. Others will have this *one Thing needful* to be a Life of Meditation and Contemplation, which *Mary* had all-along addicted herſelf to; but her chooſing to take the Advantage of our Saviour's Company, to hear him for an Hour or two, rather than prepare a Supper for him, is not Foundation enough for this Conjecture; and therefore we cannot but think,

that

that the moſt general Interpretation, concerning *the Care of the Soul, with Reference to Eternity*, is the beſt.

The Practice among the *Jews*, of referring *civil* Matters to *eccleſiaſtical* Perſons, as Judges, began in the Captivity of *Babylon*, when, by this Means, the *Jews* avoided the bringing their Differences before *Heathen* Judges. Under the Dominion of the *Romans*, they were indulged a greater Liberty, and had civil Courts made up of Perſons of their own Religion. In Caſes of private Difference between Man and Man, it was uſual to make either the Conſiſtory of three, or ſome others, choſen by the contending Parties, Arbitrators. Whether both theſe Brothers had agreed to refer their Difference to our Lord's Determination, or this *one* of them only deſired him to interpoſe his Authority, if not to injoin, at leaſt to perſuade his Brother to come to an Accommodation, 'tis difficult to ſay, becauſe the Scripture is ſilent: But this we may obſerve, that the ordinary Rule of Inheritance among the *Jews* was, for the eldeſt Son to have a double Portion of his Father's Eſtate, and the reſt to be divided equally among the other Children; but, in what came by the Mother, the eldeſt had no Prerogative above the reſt, the Diviſion among them was equal. Whatever then the Controverſy between theſe Brothers was, our Saviour might very juſtly refuſe to intermeddle in it, and that, not only becauſe it was inconſiſtent with his Deſign of coming into the World, which was to promote Mens ſpiritual, rather than their temporal Intereſts, but becauſe it might probably have drawn upon him the Envy and Calumny of the *Jewiſh* Rulers, who might be apt to ſay,

that he took upon him an Office, to which he had no Call, in Prejudice to them who were legally appointed to it.

The general Opinion is, that the Maſſacre which *Pilate* had cauſed of ſome *Galileans*, relates to the Sedition which *Judas Gaulonites* raiſed againſt the *Roman* Government in *Judea*, when he, and one *Sadducus*, a *Phariſee*, poſſeſſed the People with a Notion, "That Taxes were a Badge of "their Slavery; that they ought to acknowledge "no Sovereign, but God himſelf; nor pay any "Tribute, but to his Temple." 'Twas in *Galilee*, very probably, where this *Judas* firſt broached theſe Sentiments, and there acquired ſuch a Multitude of Followers and Abetters, as made *Joſephus* call him *Galileus*, as well as *Gaulonites*. Nay, all his Followers in general, tho' they were of different Provinces by Birth, obtained the ſame Name. But when they came to *Jeruſalem*, at one of the great Feſtivals, and began to ſpread theſe ſeditious Notions againſt *Cæſar*, *Pilate*, who was then the *Roman* Governor, having had Intelligence of it, cauſed a conſiderable Number of them to be ſlain in the Temple, while they were ſacrificing.

The Fountain of *Siloam* roſe at the Foot of the Wall of the Eaſt Part of the City of *Jeruſalem*. The Tower, called after its Name, was doubtleſs built upon the Wall, not far from it; and, being now become ancient, might fall upon ſuch a Number of People, either paſſing by, or ſtanding under it. But how this Accident came to paſs we have no manner of Certainty, becauſe this Paſſage in St. *Luke* is the only Place where we find any Mention made of this Piece of Hiſtory.

To

To verify the Prediction of our Saviour upon the impenitent *Jews*, that the like or worſe Judgments ſhould befal them, we may remember what *Joſephus* has told us of them, *viz.* that, under the Government of *Cumanus*, twenty Thouſand of them were deſtroyed about the Temple: That, upon the Admiſſion of the *Idumæans* into the City, eight Thouſand and five hundred of the High-prieſt's Party were ſlain, inſomuch that there was a Flood of Blood quite round the Temple: That, upon the threefold Faction that happened in *Jeruſalem*, before the Siege of the *Romans*, the Temple was every where polluted with Slaughter; the Prieſts were ſlain in the Exerciſe of their Function; many, who came to worſhip, fell before their Sacrifices; and the dead Bodies of Strangers and Natives were promiſcuouſly blended together, and ſprinkled the Altar with their Blood; and that, upon the *Romans* taking the City and Temple, Mountains of dead Bodies were piled up about the Altar; Streams of Blood ran down the Steps of the Temple; ſeveral were deſtroyed by the Fall of Towers; and others choaked in the ſultry Ruins of the Galleries over the Porches.

Some of the Ancients are of Opinion, that, by the three Years Unfruitfulneſs of the Fig-Tree, we are to underſtand the three Diſpenſations under which Mankind have lived, *viz.* under the *natural* Law, from the Beginning of the World, to the Time of *Moſes*; under the *written* Law, from *Moſes* to *Jeſus Chriſt*; and under the *evangelical* Law, from *Jeſus Chriſt* to the End of the World. Others rather mean by them the three Kinds of Government under which the *Jews* had lived, *viz.* the Government of *Judges*, from *Joſhua* to *Saul*; the

the Government of *Kings*, from *Saul* to the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; and the Government of *High-prieſts*, from the Captivity to the Time of *Jeſus Chriſt*. But theſe Explications are a little too arbitrary; nor will the three Years of our Saviour's Preaching among the *Jews* come up to the Point, becauſe the *Jews* were not deſtroyed the next Year (as the barren Fig-tree was to be cut down) but forty Years after our Lord's Aſcenſion. All that is meant by the Expreſſion therefore is, that God gave them all the Time, and all the Means, that could be deſired, to make them inexcuſable; and the Term of three Years ſeems rather to be mentioned, becauſe the Fruit of ſome Fig-trees come not to Maturity, till the third Year.

But to reſume the Thread of our Story. Every Sabbath-day our Lord's Cuſtom was to preach in one of the *Synagogues*; and while he was thus employed, he obſerved a Woman, who, for the Space of eighteen Years, had laboured under a Spirit of Infirmity, which bowed down her Body ſo, that ſhe was not able to lift herſelf up. Here was a proper Object for his Compaſſion and Power to exert themſelves; and therefore calling the Woman to him, he laid his Hands upon her, and immediately ſhe became ſtrait, and glorified God. At this the Ruler of the *Synagogue* became ſo very envious and diſpleaſed, that he told the People, There were ſix Days in the Week allowed by God for Labour, and that on thoſe they might come for Cure, but not on the Sabbath, which was a Day appointed for Reſt. But our Lord ſoon made him aſhamed of his Hypocriſy, by an Argument drawn from their own Practice of looſing an Ox or an Aſs from the Stall, on the Sabbath-day, and leading

leading them away to watering; and much more then might he be permitted to cure, on that Day, a Daughter of *Abraham*, whom *Satan*, for ſo many Years, had afflicted with a ſore Diſeaſe. Whereupon his Adverſaries were ſilenced; but the People were all glad and rejoiced at his glorious Actions.

The Feaſt of Dedication was approaching, when, after ſeveral Removals, our Lord repaired again to *Jeruſalem*, and, as he was walking in the Streets, on the Sabbath-day, he ſaw a poor Man that was blind from his very Birth. Upon his calling the Man to him, his Diſciples asked him, whether it was the Man's own, or his Parents Sin, that had brought that Calamity upon him? But his Blindneſs, as he told them, was not ſent for a Puniſhment of any one's Sin, but for the greater Manifeſtation of God's Glory; and ſo ſpitting upon the Ground, he made ſome Clay, and having anointed his Eyes therewith, he ſent him to waſh them in the Pool of *Siloam*; which accordingly he did, and returned with ſuch perfect Eye-ſight, that his Neighbours were amazed, and began to queſtion whether he was the ſame Man, that uſed to ſit begging, until he aſſured them, that he was the very Perſon, and to ſatisfy them farther, not only told who his Phyſician was, but in what Manner his Cure was effected.

Various were the Cenſures and Opinions of Men upon this Occaſion. The *Phariſees*, to diminiſh the Credit of the Miracle, ſaid, that *Jeſus* could not be a Prophet ſent from God, becauſe he violated the Sabbath; but others again replied, that no Impoſtor could be permitted to work ſuch Miracles, as had apparently the Finger of God in them. Thoſe who were averſe to be-

lieve the Miracle, or in Hopes of making the Thing look intricate, ſent for the Parents of the Man that was cured, and asked them theſe three Queſtions. Whether he was their Son? Whether he was born blind? And whether they knew how, and by whom he was cured? To the two firſt Queſtions they anſwered directly, that he was their Son, and was born blind; but as to the laſt, they referred them to him, who (as they told them) was of Age to anſwer for himſelf; not daring to ſay any more for fear of the *Sanhedrim*, who had made an Order to excommunicate any Perſon who ſhould acknowledge *Jeſus* to be *Chriſt*. Him therefore they began to examine; and to draw him from the good Opinion he had conceived of his Phyſician, bid him aſcribe the Glory of his Cure wholly to God, and not to look upon *Jeſus* with any Veneration, who was a Sinner and Sabbath-breaker, and conſequently could not come from God. To which the Man boldly replied, "That it was very "unaccountable, that they ſhould not perceive "from whence the Man was, whom God had "endued with ſuch a miraculous Power of open-"ing the Eyes of one blind, a Thing that was "never heard of before, ſince the World began; "and that, ſince it was a certain Truth, that God "heareth not Sinners, if he were not ſent and "impowered by God, he could never do ſuch "wonderful Cures as theſe." This provoked them ſo highly, that they firſt upbraided him with his former Blindneſs, as a Character of ſome extraordinary Ill in him, and then caſt him out of the *Synagogue* with Diſgrace: But *Jeſus* ſhortly after met him, and received him into his own Church: For he declared to him, that he was the

the *Meſſiah*; and the poor Man believing on him, immediately fell down proſtrate at his Feet, and adored him.

After that our Lord had received the poor Man's Homage, he continued his Diſcourſe, and under the Allegory of a Shepherd and his Sheep, proved the *Phariſees* to be no better than blind Guides, nay, than Thieves and Robbers, who had climbed up into the Sheepfold, or made themſelves Rulers and Governors in God's Church, without any proper Commiſſion from him. Upon the ſame Ground he condemned all thoſe falſe *Chriſts*, who before him had uſurped the Title of the *Meſſiah*, and aſſerted his own Right to it by an Argument, that no other Shepherd durſt produce, *viz. his laying down his Life for his Sheep*; which were to conſiſt of *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, and all together make up one Flock.

Let us here explain and illuſtrate what we have now advanced.

In every Synagogue there was a conſiderable Number of Doctors of the Law, who, in the Goſpel are frequently called Rulers or Governors, and over theſe there was uſually one chief Preſident. But the Perſon here ſeems not to have been the chief Preſident, but one of the ſubordinate Rulers, becauſe we find him not addreſſing himſelf directly to *Chriſt*, (which, not improbably, had he been the Preſident, he would have taken Courage to do) but only to the People in general, tho' by them he obliquely ſtruck at our Saviour.

Our Saviour declared this Ruler of the Synagogue to be an Hypocrite, partly, becauſe he placed his Holineſs in the Obſervation of the ritual Precepts of the Law (ſuch as bodily Reſt on the Sabbath-day) to the Diſparagement of the Works of

Mercy, and other great Matters of eternal Obligations; and partly, becauſe he pretended to a great Zeal for the Performance of God's Commands, when all the while, he was rather actuated by a malevolent Envy to the Glory of *Chriſt*, which he, to whom his Heart was open, perfectly knew.

When *Judas Maccabæus* had cleanſed the Temple, which had been polluted by *Antiochus Epiphanes*, he again dedicated the Altar; and this is ſuppoſed to be the Dedication, in Memory of which the *Jews* continued to celebrate a Feaſt, which fell out in the Winter, in the Month *Caſlen*, between the thirteenth and fourteenth of *November*; and being the ſame, in all Probabilty, with what in the Goſpel is called *Ta Egkainia*, was honoured and approved by our Saviour's Preſence, tho' but of human Inſtitution.

It has been obſerved before, that our Saviour made choice of the Sabbath-day, as a Day, wherein he did many of his mighty Works. It was on this Day that he cured the impotent Man, who lay at the Pool of *Betheſda*, *John* v. 10. On this Day that he healed him who had the withered Hand, *Matt.* xii. 10. and now on this Day likewiſe, that he gave Sight to the Man that was born blind, *John* ix. 14. and poſſibly he might chuſe this, becauſe it was the Day whereon he ordinarily preached that heavenly Doctrine, which he confirmed by theſe miraculous Works; or perhaps, that he might inſtruct the *Jews* (if they would have received Inſtruction) in the right Obſervation of the Sabbath, and arm his Diſciples againſt that pernicious Doctrine of the *Phariſees*, *viz.* that it was not lawful to do Good, or to perform Works of Mercy and Compaſſion on that Day.

What

What the Diſciples might mean by the Sin of the blind Man's Parents is no hard Matter to ſolve, conſidering the ſtrict Prohibition in the Law, *Levit.* xx. 18. of not coming near a menſtruous Woman, which was thought to have ſo ill an Influence upon the Child, as to make it obnoxious to Leproſy or Mutilation, and might conſequently be the Cauſe of this Perſon's Blindneſs: But what we are to underſtand by his own Sin, before he was born, is not ſo eaſy to be determined. That it cannot relate to the original Sin, which he brought into the World with him, is evident, becauſe all Mankind (our Lord excepted) are equally guilty of this; nor does this entail upon them any corporeal Imperfection: And therefore the Sin here intended, muſt be ſomething ſpecial and perſonal, Now, whoever conſiders that the Opinion of the *Platoniſts* and *Pythagoreans*, concerning the Pre-exiſtence of Souls, their Tranſmigration from one Body to another, and being ſent into Bodies better or worſe, according to their Merit or Demerit, had obtained among the *Jews*, and more eſpecially among the *Phariſees*, need not much wonder to find our Lord's Diſciples infected with it, or at leaſt deſirous to know their Maſter's Sentiments about it. The Author of the *Book of Wiſdom*, where, ſpeaking of himſelf, he tells us, *that, being good, he came into a Body undefiled*, i. e. free from any notable Infirmity, Chap. viii. 20. gives Countenance to this Doctrine; and in the Writings of *Philo* and of *Joſephus* we have it confirmed to us: And therefore the Diſciples may well be ſuppoſed to enquire here, whether our Lord allowed of the prevailing Notion, *viz.* That the Soul of this Man might be put into this imperfect Body, for the Puniſhment of what he

had done, either in or out of the Body, in a pre-exiſtent State.

It muſt not be thought, that God did any ways actively occur to make this Man blind, tho' in his Wiſdom, he thought fit to leave this Imperfection in the plaſtick Matter, whereof he was formed, unrectified, that thereby he might ſhew by his miraculous Cure, a powerful Motive to believe.

We read of nothing medicinal in this Water of *Siloam*, only our Lord was pleaſed to ſend the blind Man to waſh his Eyes here, as a Probation of his Faith and Obedience; in the ſame Manner as of old, *Naaman* the *Syrian* was ſent to waſh in the River *Jordan*.

Our Saviour's healing the blind Man on the Sabbath-day, occaſioned the *Phariſees* to ſay, that *Jeſus* could not be a Prophet ſent from God, becauſe he violated the Sabbath: And yet they themſelves acknowledge, that a Prophet might do, and command Things contrary to the Reſt required by the Sabbath, which they alſo prove by the Example of *Joſhua*, who commanded, that *the Ark ſhould be carried round* Jericho, *the armed Men going before, and after it, ſeven Days*, one of which muſt be the Sabbath, *Joſh.* vi. How then could that, which Prophets, by the known Principles of the *Jews*, were allowed to do, prove that *Jeſus* was no Prophet, eſpecially if we conſider, that by theſe Actions of Mercy and Goodneſs he did not indeed violate the Reſt of the Sabbath, but only their corrupt Traditions concerning it.

The general Opinion is, that among the *Jews* there were three Kinds of Excommunication; that the firſt was called *Niddui*, that is to ſay, *Separation*, which laſted for thirty Days, and ſepa-

rated

rated the Perſon from the Uſe of all Things holy: The ſecond was called *Cherem* or *Execration*, which excluded the Perſon from the *Synagogue*, and deprived him of all civil Commerce: And the third *Shamatha*, or *Exciſion*, which removed him from all Hopes of returning to the *Synagogue* any more. But *Selden* maintains, that theſe three Terms *Niddui*, *Cherem* and *Shammatha*, are oftentimes ſynonymous, and that the *Jews*, properly ſpeaking, never had more than two Sorts of Excommunication, the greater and the leſs; tho' moſt are agreed, that it was the greater Sort of Excommunication, which the *Sanhedrim* threatened to any one that ſhould confeſs that *Jeſus* was the *Chriſt*; becauſe the Parents of the blind Man were ſo fearful of it, that they durſt not ſpeak out.

They who loſe their Sight by a Diſeaſe, may be cured; but no Man, no not *Moſes*, or any of the Prophets, ever did, or ever could, without the Aſſiſtance of a divine Power, give Sight to one born blind; for which Reaſon the *Jews* reckon this among among the Signs of the *Meſſiah*, that he ſhould open the Eyes of the Blind.

But *doth not God hear Sinners?* (according to the Saying of the blind Man) Then whom can he hear, ſince no Man liveth, and commiteth not Sin againſt God? 'Tis true, indeed: But then the Sinners, which the poor Man may be ſuppoſed here to mean, are not thoſe who become ſuch through Ignoranc, Weakneſs, or human Infirmity, but ſuch notorious and preſumptuous Sinners, as go on in their Impieties, with an high Hand, and an hardened Heart, of whom the Spirit of God declares; *when they ſpread forth their Hands, I will hide myſelf from them; and when*

they

they make many Prayers, I will not hear, Iſa. i. 15. The Maxim, however, is here to be underſtood, not in a general, but a reſtrained Senſe, *viz.* that God uſeth not to honour notorious and flagitious Sinners (eſpecially when they pretend to come with a Meſſage from him) by giving them a Power to work Miracles, in order to confirm the Truth of what they ſay. For this is the Force of the poor Man's Argument, That *Chriſt* could not be ſuch a notorious Sinner, as he was repreſented to him; becauſe it was inconſiſtent with the Attributes of God, to honour ſuch Perſons with his Preſence and Aſſiſtance, in doing ſuch Works as none could do, without a divine Power committed to them.

That the Alluſion of a Shepherd was very proper and pertinent, with regard to the Perſons to whom our Saviour addreſſed his Diſcourſe, the Condition and Cuſtom of that Country may convince us. For the greateſt Part of the Wealth and Improvement there conſiſted in Sheep; and the Examples of *Jacob* and *David*, in particular, are Proofs, that the keeping of theſe was not uſually committed to Servants and Strangers, (as it is among us) but to Men of the greateſt Quality, and Subſtance. The Children of the Family, nay, the Maſters and Owners themſelves made it their Buſineſs; and eſteemed the looking to their Flocks a Care and Employment, in no wiſe below them. Hence, probably, came the frequent Metaphor of ſtiling Kings the Shepherds of their People. Hence the antient Prophets deſcribe the *Meſſiah* in the Character of a Shepherd; and our bleſſed Saviour, to ſhew that he was the Perſon intended by the Prophets, applies the ſame Character to himſelf; thereby to repreſent his Government of the Church, and tender Concern for

for Mankind. *He ſhall feed his Flock like a Shepherd; he ſhall gather the Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his Boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with Young*, Iſai. lx. 11. *Shall ſeek that which was loſt, and bring again that which was driven away; ſhall bind up that which was broken, and ſtrengthen that which was ſick*, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. all lively Emblems of our Lord's paſtoral Care, and of the various Methods which he hath employed to accommodate his Diſpenſations to our Wants, in order to promote our eternal Salvation. And, as the Character of a Shepherd did well become our gracious Saviour, ſo there is ſomething in the very Nature and Diſpoſition of Sheep (which appears ſo innocent and inoffenſive, ſo peaceful and gentle, ſo patient and ſubmiſſive, ſo honeſt and undeſigning) as carries a near Reſemblance to that Plainneſs and Probity, that Modeſty and Humility, that Quietneſs and Submiſſion, which are, indeed, the firſt Elements of the *Chriſtian* Religion, as well as the Qualifications requiſite to the Reception of it. It is to be obſerved, however, that as the Shepherd's Art in managing his Sheep, in the *Eaſtern* Countries, was different to what is among us, (to which Purpoſe we read of his going before, leading and calling his Sheep, and of their following and knowing his Voice; whereas our Snepherds go after and drive their Sheep) ſo theſe ſeveral Expreſſions do, in the Moral, denote our Lord's receiving into the Number of *Chriſtians* all thoſe humble and obedient Souls, that come to him in the Spirit of Meekneſs, not in the Cloathing, but in the real Qualities of his Sheep, and making Proviſion for their Growth in Grace, and Improvement in all Virtue and Godlineſs of Living.

Accord-

According to the primary Inſtitution of God, it was the proper Province of the Sons of *Levi to teach the Children of* Iſrael *all the Statutes, which the Lord had ſpoken unto them, by the Hand of* Moſes, Levit. x. 11. and therefore it was required, that *the Prieſts Lips ſhould preſerve Knowledge, and the People ſeek his Law at their Mouths*, Mal. ii. 4, 7. but (however it came about) no ſooner did their Traditions grow in Eſteem, than the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, not only took upon them to be the Guides and Teachers of the People, but maintained likewiſe, that others were to receive Authority to teach, from their Commiſſion and Ordination to that Office, though we no where find that they received any ſuch Authority from God; for which Reaſon our Saviour repreſents them as *a Plantation which his Father had not planted*, Mat. xv. 13. and bids his Diſciples *beware of their Doctrine*, Mat. xvi. 12. becauſe *they taught for Doctrines of God the Commandments of Men, and made void the Commandments of God by their Traditions*, Mat. xv. 6, 9.

In ſeveral of the *Greek* Copies, as well as the *Syriac*, *Perſian* and *Gothic*, the Words *before me*, John x. 8. (for our Saviour ſpeaks in his own Perſon) are omitted; and ſome Criticks are of Opinion, that this Omiſſion was early, becauſe the *Manichees* (according to *Theophylact*) made no Scruple to infer from hence, that the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament*, had not their Miſſion from God. Our Saviour has ſufficiently eſtabliſhed the Authority of the Prophets; and by this Paſſages means no more, than that all thoſe, who, before him, had taken upon them the Title and Quality of *Meſſiah* (ſuch as *Theudas* and *Judas Galilæus*, mentioned *Acts* v. 36, 37.) were Thieves and Robbers, becauſe they

Christ pronounces those blessed who entertain Strangers.

Matt. 25. 35.

they uſurped a Character which they had no Right to; and that all before him, who either had not their Commiſſion from God, or could not prove it by extraordinary Miracles (ſuch as the Author of the *Rabbinical Traditions*, and of all the other reigning Sects among the *Jews*) were far from being the true Shepherds of God's People.

His Sheep are here ſuppoſed by ſome to be his elect and peculiar Friends; and thence they infer, that *Chriſt* laid down his Life for them only. Now, if we reſpect the Council of God, and the Deſign of *Jeſus Chriſt*, nothing is more certain, than that he gave himſelf *a Ranſom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. and *taſted Death for every Man*, Heb. ii. 9. and *was a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World*, 1 *John* ii. but then, becauſe the World can no otherwiſe lay hold on the Benefits of this Propitiation, than by believing, and being obedient to the Voice of this Shepherd, he therefore is ſaid to do this more eminently for his Sheep. The Apoſtle, I think, has determined the whole Controverſy in a few Words, *He died for all, that they who live might not live unto themſelves, but unto him who died for them.*

The *Gentiles* our Saviour calls his other Sheep. by way of Anticipation, becauſe he foreknew that many of them (when once his Goſpel came to be tendered to them) would give it a ready Reception, be converted and baptized; and becauſe the ceremonial Law (which was the Partition-wall between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*) was ſhortly to be broken down, and the *Gentiles* admitted to the ſame Privileges with the *Jews* that believed in his Name.

But now to return. Before the Concluſion of the Feaſt, as he was walking in *Solomon*'s Porch, ſeveral of the *Jews* came and required him to tell them, in poſitive Terms, whether he was the *Meſſiah* or not; to which his Anſwer was, that he had already ſufficiently informed them of that, but to no Effect; that the Miracles which he wrought in his Father's Name, were a Evidence of his Miſſion; that the Reaſon why they believed him not, was, becauſe they were not of a Diſpoſition proper for his Sheep; that to ſuch as were his Sheep, and followed him, he would give eternal Life; and that none could pull them out of his Father's Hands, or his own, becauſe *he and his Father were one.* Upon this laſt Expreſſion, the *Jews* concluded him to be a Blaſphemer, and were going to ſtone him; and tho' he reminded them of the many good Actions he had done for them in his Father's Name, and endeavoured to apologize for his calling himſelf the Son of God (becauſe in Scripture we find Judges and Magiſtrates frequently ſo ſtiled, and much more then might he, who was conſecrated and ſent by God, aſſume that Title) yet all this would not appeaſe their Rage, ſo that he was forced to leave the City, and went thence over *Jordan* to *Bethabara*, where *John* had formerly baptized; where great Multitudes reſorted to him, both to hear his Inſtructions, and to be healed of their Diſeaſes; and where he made many Diſciples, becauſe the Place put the People in Mind that whatever *John* had reported of him was true.

While he continued in theſe Parts, a certain Perſon put a curious Queſtion to him, concerning the Number of thoſe that ſhould be ſaved: Where-

upon

upon he took Occaſion to admoniſh his Hearers, "That they ought to uſe their utmoſt Endeavours to enter in at the ſtrait Gate of Salvation, becauſe the Number of thoſe who ſhould not attain it, would be large; that they ought to do it with all Expedition, becauſe when once the Gate was ſhut, and the Means of Salvation withdrawn, all Pretences of having heard the glad Tydings of the Goſpel, and of having been converſant with him upon Earth, would gain them no Admittance; that all Workers of Iniquity ſhould be utterly excluded; and therefore the *Jews*, in particular, would have Cauſe to lament, when they ſhould ſee many Heathens from all Parts of the Earth, poſſeſſed of the Glories of Heaven, with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, and all the antient Prophets; while themſelves (who were the Heirs of the Kingdom) ſhould be thruſt out, and ſo made the laſt who were once the firſt."

As he was diſcourſing in this Manner, ſome of the *Phariſees*, who could no longer bear with Patience the Power and Authority, which he had gained among the People, In Hopes of getting rid of him, came and ſuggeſted the Danger he was in from *Herod Antipas*, ſo long as he continued in *Galilee*, which was Part of his Dominions: But, far from betraying any Fear upon ſuch Information, he let the *Phariſees* know, that having but a few Days longer to live, he was determined to devote them to the Relief of the Diſtreſſed, the curing Diſeaſes, and caſting out Devils; and as to *Herod*'s Subtilty and Deſigns againſt his Life, they were altogether ſuperfluous, becauſe he foreknew that he was to ſuffer Death at *Jeruſalem*, which was the Place appointed (as it were)

for the Slaughter of all the Prophets; and hereupon he broke out into a moſt pathetic Exclamation againſt that unhappy City, reproaching them with their killing the Meſſengers ſent from God, and then denouncing their ſad approaching Deſtruction.

Take the following Notes on the preceding Paſſages.

Solomon's Porch conſiſted of ſome ſtately Cloiſters on the *Eaſt* Side of the Temple, and not far from the *Court of the Gentiles*. It was called *Solomon*'s, either to preſerve the Memory of that great Prince, or becauſe it was built according to the Model of that which he erected, 1 *Kings* vi. 3. for both in the Temple, which *Zorobabel*, and in that which *Herod* rebuilt, the Plan of *Solomon*'s was chiefly obſerved, tho' ſome Variations might be allowed of: And in this Porch our Saviour was walking; becauſe at this Time it was Winter, and here he found a Cover from the Injuries of the Weather; whereas, in the Summer Seaſon, it was cuſtomary with the *Jews* to walk in the open Courts of the Temple.

Some are of Opinion, that the Words in the Text, which we render *becauſe*, are not rational, or do not render a Reaſon for theſe People's Infidelity, but only intimate, that their Infidelity was conſequential to their not being his Sheep; or, in other Words, that they could not believe, becauſe they were not elected. But, to obviate this, we muſt obſerve, that the Reaſon which our Lord here aſſigns for this Defect of Faith, is doubtleſs ſuch, as made it a great Crime in them; for ſure that muſt be ſuch, for which they were to *die in their Sins*, *John* viii. 24. It is therefore certain, that this Unbelief cannot be reſolved into any natural

natural Defect of Knowledge on their Parts, nor any Act of Reprobation on God's Part, but purely to the Want of a teachable and well-diſpoſed Mind. For, were it the ſame Thing, to be one of *Chriſt*'s Sheep, and to be predeſtinate to Faith and Salvation, the Import of our Saviour's Words muſt be this, *Ye therefore believe not, becauſe ye are not of the Number of the Elect, but of thoſe whom God hath, from all Eternity, rejected.* Now, by this Account of the Matter, our Saviour would not have accuſed, but excuſed the Infidelity of the *Jews*, and they, with as good Reaſon, might have replied to him, "We herefore believe "not, becauſe God, by his Act of Reprobation, "hath ſhut the Door of Faith againſt us, and "ſo our Infidelity is not to be imputed to us, "but God."

By the Words, *he and his Father*, one in Eſſence and Nature, one in Authority and Power, and not barely one in Will and Conſent: And that this is the genuine Signification of the Words appears, 1ſt, From the original Text, where it is not ſaid, I and my Father are one Perſon, in the Maſculine Gender, but one Thing in the Neuter. Now if that Thing be not the Divine Being, they cannot be one; for ſince the Father is confeſſed to be God, the Son cannot be one Thing with the Father, if he be not God too. 2dly, It appears from the Context, where our Saviour, having, in the preceding Verſes, aſcribed the Preſervation of his Sheep to the Power of his Father, *None is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hands*, aſcribes the ſame alſo to his own Power, *Neither ſhall any pluck them out of my Hand*; plainly intimating, that his Sheep were equally ſafe in his own Hand,

as

as in his Father's, becauſe, ſays he, *I and my Father are one.* And 3dly, It appears from the Verſes which immediately follow; for when the *Jews* took up Stones to ſtone him, as guilty of Blaſphemy, becauſe he made himſelf God; he does not evade the Charge, by ſaying that he only conſpired with the Will of God, as all true Prophets did; but appealed to the Works, which he performed by the Power of the Father reſiding in him, which plainly carries it to an Unity of Power, not of Will only; and then St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Inference is undeniable, that *if the Power be the ſame, the Eſſence alſo is the ſame.*

The Man who propoſed the Queſtion to our Saviour, concerning the Number of thoſe who ſhould be ſaved, had doubtleſs in his Thoughts the common Opinion of the *Jews*, that all *Iſraelites* (how much ſoever they may ſuffer in this) *might have their Portion in the World to come*; but this was a Queſtion of too much needleſs Curioſity for our Saviour to anſwer, becauſe it is no Part of our Concern, how many ſhall be ſaved, but only how, and by what Means, we are to work out our own Salvation: And therefore he took Occaſion from hence to inſtruct the Man (and in him all others) in what might be of much more ſubſtantial Benefit to him.

This Expreſſion of the *ſtrait Gate*, whether it was borrowed from the Heathen Sages, or no, is extreamly like them: For *Cebes* tells us, that at the firſt Entrance upon a Courſe of Virtue, *there is a little Gate*; that after we have paſſed this Gate, *there is a narrow Aſcent*; and that the Way following is *rough and rugged*, becauſe it is not much frequented; but that, *after we have got up*

to

to the Top of the Hill, the reſt is ſmooth and eaſy, free from all Obſtructions, and leading to the Regions of Felicity.

And hence we may perceive, to our Comfort, that tho' the Ways of Virtue and Religion are not, at their firſt Entrance, ſo very agreeable, yet, in Proceſs of Time, they will be found to be *Ways of Pleaſantneſs*, Chriſt's *Yoke eaſy, and his Commandments not grievous.*

Whether the *Phariſees*, who ſuggeſted to him the Danger he was in from *Herod Antipas*, came upon their own Account, or by the Inſtigation of *Herod*, is the Queſtion, If they came upon their own Account, it is certain that they came not out of any Kindneſs to our Saviour; becauſe the whole Hiſtory of the Goſpel informs us, that they were far from having any Affection for him, and therefore they muſt come with a Deſign, either to ſcare him out of *Galilee*, where he had been too popular for them, or to drive him into a Trap, which they had laid for him in *Judea*. This ſeems to be a genuine Interpretation enough of the Senſe of the *Evangeliſt*; and therefore, in our Hiſtory we have followed it: But ſtill it ſeems not improbable, that, conſidering the preſent Circumſtances that *Herod* was under, he might ſend theſe Meſſengers to our Saviour. He had but lately gained no good Reputation among the *Jews*, by murthering *John*, whom all the World looked upon as a Prophet: And therefore, ſeeing that our Saviour excelled *John*, eſpecially in the Fame and Renown of his Miracles, he was unwilling to augment the *Odium*, which already lay upon him, by any freſh Acts of Violence to a Perſon that was reputed a Prophet, much ſuperior to the *Baptiſt*, whom he had ſlain. He had got a Notion too, that

that the *Baptiſt*, at leaſt the Soul of the *Baptiſt*, in another Body, was riſen from the Dead, and what the Effect of his Ghoſt's haunting his Dominions might be, he could not tell; and therefore he might think it convenient to put theſe *Phariſees* upon ſome Expedient to get our Saviour (whom poſſibly he might take for *John* revived) removed farther from him. However this be, 'tis certain, that he, or the *Phariſees*, or both, had a Mind to have him gone ſomewhere elſe, and that, for this Purpoſe the Meſſage was brought him.

The Subtility of that Prince is implied in the Anſwer which our Saviour makes to the *Phariſees*, and which looks, indeed, as if they had been ſent from him, *Go tell that Fox:* The Expreſſion, however, may be taken, either in a mild or an harſher Senſe. If in a mild, it may denote that exquiſite Policy, wherewith this Prince conducted his Affairs all his Life-time, ſiding ſometimes with the *Jews*, ſometimes with the *Romans*, ſometimes with the *Phariſees*, and ſometimes with the *Sadducees*, juſt as it ſuited his Intereſt: But, ſuppoſe it be taken in an harſh Senſe, it will no Ways affect our Saviour's Character, nor infringe the Command of not *ſpeaking Evil of the Ruler of the People*, ſince our Lord was a Prophet ſent from God, and the Office of a Prophet is, not to ſpare Kings, when they reprove their Offences.

Some are of Opinion, that becauſe the *Jews* had referred to the *Sanhedrim*, which ſat at *Jeruſalem*, the whole Cognizance and Trial of Prophets, therefore a Prophet was not to ſuffer out of that City; but this Interpretation ſeems to enervate our Saviour's Sentiment, whoſe Deſign certainly was to repreſent the City of *Jeruſalem*,

ſo accuſtomed to ſhed the Blood of the Prophets, that there was ſcarce a Poſſibility for any Prophets dying out of it.

Let us now proceed. One Sabbath-day, when *Jeſus* was invited by a *Phariſee* of ſome Diſtinction to dine with him, a Man diſtempered with a Dropſy came after him; and when ſeveral of the Company narrowly obſerved how he would behave upon this Occaſion, he firſt cured the poor Man, and then juſtified his doing ſo, by the ſame Argument he made uſe of to thoſe who reprehended him for curing the crooked Woman on the Sabbath-day. Obſerving, however, how eager the Gueſts were to take every one the uppermoſt Places at the Table, he endeavoured to convince them, how commendable it was for a Man to ſeat himſelf in a Place below, rather than above his Rank and Condition, becauſe daily Experience ſhewed us, that Humility was a Virtue, which was ſo far from debaſing, that it raiſed and exalted the Perſon who practiſed it. And then, turning his Diſcourſe to the Maſter of the Houſe, whom he found too regardleſs of the Poor and Needy, he gave him (and in him all others) the good Advice of inviting the Poor, the Blind, and the Lame, who could make no Requital, rather than his own Friends, or rich Acquaintance, who were able to return the Compliment to his Entertainments; and in ſo doing, he might depend upon a Recompence from God in the Kingdom of Heaven.

At the hearing of theſe laſt Words, one in the Company repeated that common ſaying among the *Rabbins*, *Bleſſed is he, that ſhall eat Bread in the Kingdom of God*; whereupon our Lord took

Occaſion to repreſent the different Succeſs of the Goſpel, the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Call of the *Gentiles*, under the Emblem of a Feaſt, to which thoſe that were invited, upon ſundry Pretences refuſed to come; ſo that the Maſter of the Houſe was obliged to ſend out into the Streets and Lanes of the City, and into the High-ways and Hedges, to collect a ſufficient Compliment of Gueſts, being determined that none of thoſe who were firſt invited, ſhould taſte of his Supper.

As he was going from the *Phariſee*'s Houſe, where he dined, being attended with a mighty Concourſe of People, he began to explain to them what they were to truſt to, if they intended to become his Diſciples; that they were to renounce even ſome of their moſt lawful Affections, and prepare themſelves to undergo the moſt unjuſt Perſecutions, if they thought of making Profeſſion of his Religion; and therefore (that they might not fail in the Day of Trial) he adviſed them to conſider well before-hand, what ſuch a Profeſſion would coſt them, "For, as he who begins to "build, and has not Money to accompliſh it, "leaves his Work imperfect, and himſelf be-"comes ridiculous; or as he, that deſigns a War, "and has not Men and Money enough to go "through with it, had better never have en-"gaged in it; ſo he that undertakes to be a "Chriſtian, muſt reſolve to renounce all that is "dear to him in this World, or elſe he will "never be able to hold out."

Among the great Multitudes, that daily reſorted to our Saviour to hear his Diſcourſes, were many Publicans, and Sinners. This gave great Offence to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who murmured

mured at his condeſcending Goodneſs, in ſo freely converſing and eating with ſuch infamous People. But to vindicate himſelf in this Reſpect, he compared his Conduct to that of a Man, who having an hundred Sheep, left the ninety and nine, to go in Queſt of one, which was gone aſtray; to that of a Woman ſearching with all Diligence for a Piece of Silver that was loſt, and rejoicing exceedingly when ſhe found it; and to that of a Father, receiving his returning prodigal Son with all the Indications of Joy and Tenderneſs, notwithſtanding the Remonſtrances of his elder Brother: For, under the Name of the elder Brother, he reproved the unjuſt Murmurings of the *Phariſees*, who were diſpleaſed at his entertaining *Sinners*, tho' the Salvation of ſuch was the main End of his coming into the World.

Having thus expoſed the Pride and Envy of the *Phariſees*, he proceeded, in the next Place, to reprove their Covetouſneſs, and at the ſame Time, to inſtruct his Diſciples, what the proper Uſe was, that they were to make of their Riches. To this Purpoſe he introduces an unjuſt Steward, who, after having abuſed his Truſt, and waſted his Maſter's Subſtance, is contriving what Proviſion to make for himſelf (which he does by abating his Maſter's Creditors in their Bills) when he came to be removed from his Place; and thereupon he teaches his Diſciples not to imitate the Injuſtice, but the Forecaſt and Policy of this Steward, by employing their earthly Riches to make them Friends in the Perſons of the Poor, that when they came to leave this tranſitory World, they might, by this Means, be received into everlaſting Habitations in Heaven; and that ſo the Children of Light might become as prudent in

Things relating to their Salvation, as the Children of this World were, in the Management of their temporal Affairs.

This Diſcourſe made little or no Impreſſion upon the *Phariſees*; and therefore (to awaken their Attention) he propounded to them the Parable of a certain rich Man living in Pride and Eaſe, and Luxury, who, after his Death, was carried into the diſmal Regions of the Damned; and of a certain poor Beggar, named *Lazarus*, lying at his Gate full of Sores and Ulcers, and deſiring the Fragments that came from his Table, who, when he died, was tranſported by Angels into *Abraham*'s Boſom: "That in theſe different States, the poor "Man, in Compenſation of his former Miſery, "enjoyed all the Felicity that his Heart could "wiſh; while the rich Man, in Puniſhment of "his Luxury, and Want of Mercy to the Poor, "was forced to undergo the moſt inexpreſſible "Torments, without being able to procure ſo "much as one Drop of Water to cool his inflam-"ed Tongue, and without being able to pre-"vail for the once deſpiſed *Lazarus* to be ſent "upon a Meſſage of Admonition to his ſurviving "Brethren, becauſe they had *Moſes* and the Pro-"phets for their Inſtructors, or a ſtanding Reve-"lation of the divine Will; and if that prevailed "not with them, nothing would, for the Directi-"on of their Lives."

Here let us give ſome Explanations of what we have ſaid.

The Preſence of the dropſical Man, and its being the Sabbath-day, would involve our Saviour (as they thought) in this Difficulty, That either, by forbearing to heal at that Time, he would betray his Fear, and ſtrengthen their Superſtitions

ſtitions with Regard to ſuch ritual Obſervances; or elſe, that by doing it he muſt incur the Cenſure and Odium of a Sabbath-breaker, and a Contemner of the Law: But he, who was well aware what Spies he had upon him, ſo ordered the Matter, as to accompliſh what he ſaw fit, without any Opportunity given for his Enemies to compaſs their Ends by it.

Whether the Precept of inviting the Poor, *&c.* is to be underſtood in a literal Senſe, or no, may, in ſome Meaſure, admit of a Debate. Our Saviour, when he acted the Part of a rich Man, in feeding the Multitude, had People of the meaneſt Rank; and among theſe, the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, and the Blind (who daily reſorted to him for Cure) for the Chief of his Gueſts: But moſt Men think, that theſe extraordinary Actions of his were no proper Pattern for us, in the Diſpenſation of our Charity, but that we anſwer the Intent of the Precept, if we do what is equivalent us, in thereſpect of Charge, and more advantagious to them and their Families, by ſending them Meat or Money to refreſh them at Home.

The Words of the Text are, *When thou makeſt a Dinner, or a Supper, call not thy Friends, nor thy Brethren, neither thy Kinſmen, nor thy rich Neighbours.* It is to be obſerved, in our expounding of Scripture, that as comparative Particles are ſometimes uſed in a Senſe negative, (for ſo we find the chief Prieſts moving the People, that *Pilate* ſhould rather releaſe *Barabbas* to them, *i. e.* that he ſhould releaſe *Barabbas*, and not *Jeſus*) ſo negative Particles are oft uſed in a Senſe comparative, as when we read in *Proverbs* viii. 10. *Receive my Inſtructions, and not Silver*, and in *Joel* ii. 13. *Rend your Hearts, and not your Garments*, the

the Meaning is rather than Silver, or your Garments; in like Manner as here, *Call not thy Friends, nor Brethren*, i. e. be not ſo much concerned to call them, as the Poor. For it can hardly be thought, that our Saviour's Intent in this Precept was abſolutely to forbid all Invitations of our Neighbours and Acquaintance; but his only Meaning is, that we ſhould not invite them, out of a Proſpect of a Compenſation from them again, which is making a Kind of Traffick with our Generoſity; but, inſtead of this, that we ſhould expend our Money in the Exerciſe of Charity to ſuch as are in no Condition to make us a Retribution.

From the enſuing Parable it appears, that the Kingdom of God here does not ſignify the Kingdom of Heaven, in its moſt exalted Senſe; but only the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, whereof this carnal *Jew* here ſpeaks, according to the received Senſe of his Nation, as of a glorious temporal Kingdom, in which the *Jews* ſhould lord it over the *Gentile* World, enjoy their Wealth, and be provided with all thoſe earthly Bleſſings and Delights, in which they placed their Felicity.

If we compare the Emblem of a Feaſt, repreſenting the Rejecting of *Jews*, and the Call of the *Gentiles*, with the Paſſages in *Mat.* xxii. 2. we may be ſatisfied, that by the Kingdom of Heaven is here repreſented the Goſpel Diſpenſation; and this, as it miniſters true Plenty and Pleaſure, all that Men can want, and all they can wiſh, to render them perfectly happy, is compared to a Feaſt. The Bounty and infinite Love of Almighty God are ſignified by the Greatneſs of that Supper; and the Multitudes bidden to it. The firſt Bidding implies all the previous Notices of the *Meſſiah*, which

which by the Law and the Prophets were intended, to prepare the *Jews* for the Reception of him and his Doctrine. The ſecond Bidding, when all Things were ready, ſeems to import all that *Jeſus* did, and taught and ſuffered for their Converſion and Salvation, and all the Teſtimonies and Exhortations of his Apoſtles and other Preachers of the Goſpel, to the ſame Purpoſe. The Excuſes ſent for their Abſence, are the Prejudices, and Paſſions, and worldly Intereſt, which did not only hinder thoſe *Jews* from coming into the Faith, but diſpoſed them likewiſe to treat all Attempts to win them over with the utmoſt Obſtinacy and Contempt. The Gueſts brought in from abroad to ſupply their Places, are the *Gentile* World, to whom (after that the *Jews had thruſt it from them*) the ſubſequent Tenders of this Grace and Salvation were made: And the declaring that none of thoſe, who were bidden, ſhould taſte of this Supper, denote the giving thoſe *Jews* over to a reprobate Senſe, and leaving them under that Infidelity and Perverſeneſs, in which they continue hardened to this very Day.

It was a Cuſtom of the *Jewiſh* Doctors to lay down before their Proſelytes what Inconveniencies would attend upon their Precepts; and in conformity to this, our Saviour acquaints his Diſciples with two Things, that would be a Means to deter them from embracing his Religion, *viz.* the Difficulty of the Duties that would be required of them; and the Greatneſs of the Sufferings to which they would be expoſed.

The Meaning of the Words in the Text, *If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and*

and Siſter, yea, and his own Life alſo, he cannot be my Diſciple, in this Place is not, that a Man ſhould, properly ſpeaking, hate his Father and his Mother: For certainly our bleſſed Lord, who enjoins us to love our Enemies, would never make it our Duty to hate our Parents: And therefore the Word *Miſein* (which is an *Hebraiſm*) muſt neceſſarily here be taken in a lower Senſe, *viz. to love or eſteem leſs*, in the ſame Manner as it is ſaid of *Leah*, that *Jacob hated her*, *Gen.* xxix. 31. *i. e.* did not love her ſo well as he did *Rachael*: For that *this* and no *more*, is here the Import of the Expreſſion is plain from a parallel Text, *He that loveth Father and Mother, more than me, is not worthy of me.*

They, whom the Scripture generally, and the *New Teſtament* in particular, characterize by the Name of *Sinners*, are the habitual and obdurate, the great and eminent Offenders.

The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* looked upon the *Publicans* as unfit to be converſed with upon any Account, even tho' it was to reclaim them from their evil Courſes. Our Saviour had told them, that he converſed among ſuch People, as their Phyſician, and not as their Companion; and that, therefore, his proper Buſineſs was among ſuch Patients: But this Apology would not ſilence their Murmuring, becauſe their Opinion was, that God had caſt off all Care of them, and never intended to grant them Repentance unto Life.

Here *Chriſt* ſets ninety and nine juſt Perſons in Oppoſition to one Sinner; not that it is ſo in Proportion; for there are very few who live according to the Rule that is preſcribed them; but becauſe, even upon a Suppoſition that it were ſo, ſuch

The Man without the Wedding Garment, being examin'd how he Came there, is Speechles. **Matt. 22. 12.**

ſuch is the Value of our immortal Souls, that great Care and Pains ought to be taken even for the Sake of one.

A Sheep, when once it has ſtrayed away, is a Creature remarkably ſtupid and heedleſs: It goes wandering on, without either Power or Inclination to return back, tho' each Moment it is in Danger of becoming a Sacrifice to every Beaſt of Prey that meets it. And ſuch, in Truth, is the Condition of People addicted to Vice, when they have broken out of God's Fold, and forſaken the pleaſant Paſtures which he provides for them. They grow careleſs and inconſiderate, and are expoſed to Snares and Temptations every Moment. They are hardened by Cuſtom; are depraved in their Affections and Judgments; are neither diſpoſed to grow wiſer, nor of themſelves capable of conquering inveterate Habits of Vice, tho' they ſhould, now and then, ſhew ſome good Inclination to attempt it.

By the Compariſon of a *loſt Piece of Money*, we are given to underſtand, that God eſteems the Souls of Men precious, and reckons them among his Wealth, and his Treaſures: And his, indeed, they are; made and formed by his own Hand; impreſſed with his own Image and Superſcription; and from that Stamp, which carries a Reſemblance to the great King of the whole World, deriving all their Currency and Value. But when they abandon God's Laws, and forſake the divine and rational Life; a Life of Goodneſs and Wiſdom, renounced for one of Senſuality and Madneſs, and Miſchief, then they are loſt; loſt to themſelves, and loſt to God. Then this Coin is debaſed, the Impreſſion obliterated and gone, and that Piece of Money, as to the Worth and Uſe

of it, is, in a Manner, as if it were no longer in being.

The Parable of the *prodigal Son* is deſervedly reckoned a Maſter-piece, and what cannot be paralleled by any of the Apologues or allegorical Writings of Heathen Authors. It is adorned and beautified with the moſt glowing Colours, and lively Similitudes. It is carried on and conducted with admirable Wiſdom and Proportion, in the Parts, as well as in the Whole, and there is ſo exact a Relation, between the Things preſented, and the Repreſentations of them, that the moſt elevated Underſtanding will admire, and the loweſt Capacity diſcover the excellent and moſt uſeful Moral, that lies under ſo thin a Veil.

There is a good deal in this and the following Parable, that alludes to the Notions of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, and their Manner of expreſſing them. " The Fruits of the Earth (ſays one of their Doc-" tors) are like a Table ſpread in an Houſe; the " Owner of this is God: Man, in this World, is " as it were, the Steward of this Houſe; if he " behaves himſelf well, he will find Favour " in the Eyes of his Lord, if otherwiſe, he will " be removed from his Stewardſhip, " *Kimchi*, on *Iſai.* xl. And ſo the Scope of this following Parable ſeems to be this, —— That we are to look upon ourſelves, not as Lords of the good Things of this Life, as tho' we might uſe them at our Pleaſure, but only as Stewards, who muſt be faithful in the Adminiſtration of them. The Parables, indeed, make mention of no other Goods but thoſe of Riches; but we muſt not therefore imagine, that rich Men only ſtand in the Capacity of Stewards, ſince every Advantage of Nature or of Grace, as well as thoſe of Fortune, our Life,

Life, our Health, our Strength, our Wit and Parts, our Knowledge natural and acquired, our Time, our Leiſure, our every Ability, our every Opportunity, our every Inclination to do well, are all our Maſter's Goods; all intruſted with us; all capable of benefiting others, and will all, at laſt, be brought to our Account.

The Words in the Text are, *Make yourſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs.* Now *Mammon* or *Mammona*, is a *Syriac* Word, and properly denotes Riches or a Treaſure. It comes from a *Hebrew* Root, which ſignifies *to be hid*; and is therefore thought to comprehend, not only Gold, Silver, and other Metals that are hid in the Bowels of the Earth, but Stores likewiſe of Corn, Wine, and Oil, (a great Part of the Riches of the *Eaſtern* People) which they often buried in ſubterraneous Caverns, to conceal them from their Enemies. Theſe are called the *Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*, becauſe they frequently occaſion much Iniquity in the World, and are often acquired by very indirect Means; but our Lord, by this Expreſſion, muſt not be ſuppoſed to command Alms to be given of that which is gotten by Fraud or Injuſtice, becauſe ſuch Charity can never be acceptable to God. No, the Duty of thoſe who have acquired Wealth unrighteouſly, is to make Reſtitution to the Perſons they have injured; if theſe be dead, then to their Heirs or Executors; and the Poor are only then the Receivers of the Fruits of Injuſtice, when a Perſon is conſcious that he has been unjuſt, but does not know the Perſons to whom he has been ſo.

Whether this Repreſentation, which our Saviour here makes of the different Fates of the

rich and the poor Man, be a Parable or a real Hiſtory, is a Matter, wherein ſeveral Commentators are not agreed. We are told, however, that in ſeveral Manuſcripts, both *Greek* and *Latin*, there are theſe Words in the Beginning of the 19th Verſe, *He ſpake to them another Parable*; and that this very Parable is in the *Gemara Babylonicum*, from whence it is cited by the learned *Sheringham*, in his Preface to his *Ioma*; as indeed, if we look into the Circumſtances of it, ſuch as the rich Man's *lifting up his Eyes in Hell*, and ſeeing *Lazarus* in *Abraham*'s Boſom; his Diſcourſe to *Abraham*; his Complaint, of being tormented with Flames, and his Deſire that *Lazarus* might be ſent to cool his Tongue, or at leaſt to convert his ſurviving Brethren: If (together with the great Gulph that is fixed between the two Places of Bliſs and Torment) we do but conſider theſe Particulars, I ſay, we muſt needs conclude, that, as they cannot be underſtood of any departed Soul, in a literal Senſe, they muſt be an allegorical Repreſentation of Things inviſible, by Terms, in ſome Meaſure, ſuitable to the Opinion of the *Jews*, concerning the State of Souls after Death.

Lazer, which, according to moſt, is but a Contraction from *Eleazer*, is the very ſame with *Aniachad*, a poor Man, in the *Gemara*, and properly ſignifies *one without Help*, or rather *one that has God for his Help*: But, in the Times of our bleſſed Saviour, we may obſerve, that it was a common Name among the *Jews*, and given to Men of ſome Diſtinction; as we find it was to the Brother of *Martha* and *Mary*.

The *Garden of* Eden *and* Paradiſe, the *Throne of*

of Glory, and *Abraham*'s *Boſom*, were common Expreſſions among the *Jewiſh* Doctors, to denote a future State of Felicity; for ſo *Joſephus*, in the Diſcourſe of the *Maccabees*, ſays of good Men, that *they are gathered to the Region of the Patriarchs, and that* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, *do receive their Souls:* And they tell us farther, that the Souls of ſuch Men are carried thither by Angels; for ſo the *Targum* on *Cant.* iv. 12. ſays, that *no Man hath Power to enter into the Garden of* Eden, *but the Juſt, whoſe Souls are carried thither by the Hands of good Angels.* Our Commentators, however, have perceived ſomething peculiar in the Phraſe of *Abraham*'s *Boſom.* They imagine, that the *Jewiſh* Notion of Paradiſe was, a Place abounding with Delights, and perpetual Feaſtings, where *Abraham*, the great Founder of their Nation, enjoys the uppermoſt Place at the Table; and while all his Children ſit down with him, ſome at a nearer, and ſome at a farther Diſtance from him, he who has the Honour to recline upon his Boſom, (as *Lazarus* is here repreſented) is in a higher Degree of Felicity than ordinary. But others deride all this Notion, and aſſert, that *Abraham*'s *Boſom* was ſo called, not from any Poſture of Gueſts at Table, but from little Children, whom their tender Parents do ſometimes take in their Boſom, and ſometimes cauſe them to ſleep there. For, ſince, *thoſe that die in the Lord*, ſay they, are ſaid to ſleep or *reſt from their Labours*, where can they be ſaid to enjoy this Reſt or Sleep better, than in the Boſom of the Father of the Faithful?

A good deal of this, concerning the Torments of the rich Man, is to be taken in a figurative Senſe; but our Saviour might poſſibly inſert this

Paſſage

Paſſage in the Parable, on purpoſe to ſtrike at a vain Imagination, which ſome of the *Jews* were apt to entertain, *viz. That Hell-Fire had no Power over the Sinners of* Iſrael, *becauſe* Abraham *and* Iſaac *came down thither to fetch them from thence*; which could not fail of being effectually confuted, when they heard *Abraham*, as it were, with his own Mouth, declaring that no Help was to be expected from him, when once they were got into that Place.

Moſes and the Prophets comprehend all the ſeveral Diſpenſations of God's Mercy, as expreſſed either in the *Old* or *New Teſtament*. They ſignify the whole revealed Will of God, and whatever he hath ſet down therein, as neceſſary to our attaining eternal Life and Happineſs. Whatever Doctrine can be proved out of them, we are bound to embrace it, without a new Miracle; as on the other Hand, whatever Doctrine is inconſiſtent with them, we muſt reject, tho' an *Angel from Heaven*, or one from the Dead ſhould come and preach it to us.

One riſing from the Dead certainly could not do it, becauſe he could come with no greater Authority, deliver no better Motives to Repentance, nor give them any greater Aſſurance of the Truth of what he ſaid, than what they had already. That a Reſurrection from the Dead was not ſufficient to convince them, is plain from hence, that our Saviour had raiſed *Lazarus*, and yet the Phariſees were not the more obedient to his Doctrine. Nay, tho' they had the moſt clear Proofs of his *own* Reſurrection, from the Teſtimony of their own Prophets, and their Guards that kept the Sepulchre; from the Teſtimony of their own Senſes,

Senſes, of the Apoſtles, and five hundred Witneſſes at once; yet all this was inſufficient to reclaim that wicked Generation from their Iniquity, or to move them to Repentance.

Here let us reſume our Story.

Of the great Numbers of People, who attended our Lord, wherever he went; ſome came out of Neceſſity, others out of Curioſity; ſome out of a Spirit of Devotion, and others out of a Spirit of Captiouſneſs, and with an Intent to entangle him in his Diſcourſe. Of this laſt Sort were the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who taking the Queſtion of Divorces to be ſomewhat intricate, put it to our Saviour; but he, limited the Permiſſion of ſuch Separations to the Caſe of Adultery only, reminding them of that ſtrict and natural Union between Man and Wife, which God had appointed at their firſt Creation, and was not, conſequently, to be diſannulled by any human Inſtitution. Here the *Phariſees*, thinking they had got the Advantage of the Argument, objected the Precept of *Moſes*, wherein he permitted the Husband, in many Caſes, to give a Bill of Divorce to the Wife; but to this our Saviour replied, That, tho' under the *Moſaical* Diſpenſation, God, knowing their Obſtinacy and perverſe Inclinations, allowed a Diſpenſation in this Point, by tolerating Divorces; yet, according to the original Inſtitution of Marriage, it was not ſo; and therefore, to reduce the Matter to its primary Eſtabliſhment, he determined that all Divorces, for any leſs Cauſe, than that of Fornication, were illegal, and on both Sides attended with Adultery. This, when ſome of the Diſciples heard, and (ſince the Engagement was ſo rigorous) began to expreſs their Diſlike of Marriage,

our

our Lord allowed it to be true, that in thoſe who had the Gift of Continency, a ſingle Life was more conducible towards the Attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven; but that thoſe, who had it not, and thought proper to marry, ought, by all Means, to adhere to the firſt Inſtitution.

After this, he began to remind his Diſciples of ſeveral Things he had inſtructed them in before, *viz.* of the Impoſſibility of preventing Scandals and Offences; of the Duty of forgiving our Brother his repeated Tranſgreſſions; of the Neceſſity and Efficacy of Faith, in order to be heard in our Requeſts to God; of Humility in the Performance of our Duty, becauſe at the beſt we are but unprofitable Servants; and, eſpecially, of Humility in our Addreſſes to God, of which he gave them a parabolical Inſtance, in the different Behaviour of a *Phariſee* and a *Publican*; the *Phariſee* vaunting out his own Praiſe, at his Devotion, and preferring himſelf before all others; but the *Publican*, with a dejected Heart, confeſſing his Sins, and imploring God's Mercy; and yet the latter (according to our Lord's Judgment) departed more acceptable to God, than the other; becauſe the divine Decree is, *That Pride ſhould be abaſed, and Humility exalted.*

The *Phariſees*, who waited for the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, and had drawn up a romantick Scheme, of his appearing with the utmoſt Glory, as a temporal Prince, came, about this Time, and demanded of him, *when the Kingdom of God*, whereof he had told them ſo much, *was to appear?* To which he gave them in Anſwer, That it ſhould not appear with any Pomp or Splendor, as they vainly imagined; and that, in Truth, it was already begun among them, tho' they had no Per-

ception of it: And then retuning to his Diſciples, he gave them a Caution not to be deluded by falſe Prophets, who would pretend to ſhew them the Kingdom of God, where it was not; that before he could enter into his glorified State, he was to ſuffer many Things, and be rejected by the *Jews*; but that, after his Death, he would give inconteſtible Proofs of his Power and Dominion, by the wonderful Propagation of his Goſpel, and by the ſpeedy and amazing Vengeance which he intended to take of that Nation: And therefore he exhorted them not to imitate the Security of the People in *Noah*'s Time, or of the Inhabitants of *Sodom*, nor to expreſs any Concern for the Deſtruction of their Country, as did *Lot*'s Wife, but to uſe their utmoſt Care and Diligence (when they ſaw the *Roman* Armies advancing) not to be involved in the general Calamity: And becauſe, in involving ſome, and preſerving others, there would be much of God's diſtinguiſhing Providence concerned, he therefore exhorted them to pray without fainting, or being diſcouraged at any Thing; and, to this Purpoſe, propounded a Parable of a poor Woman, who, by her continued Importunity alone, prevailed with an unjuſt Judge to vindicate her Wrongs, *tho' he feared neither God nor Man.*

The Notes to explain the foregoing Paſſages, take as follow.

The *Jews*, at this Time, were divided in their Opinions, as to the Matter of their Divorces. Some of them, who followed the Sentiments of the School of *Shammah*, held, that the Wife was to be put away only for the Crime of Adultery, becauſe *Moſes* directs, that this might be done, in Caſe the Husband *had found ſome Un-*

cleanneſs in her, Deut. xxiv. 1. But others, who adhered to the Notions of the School of *Hillel* (and they were by much the greater Number) maintained, on the contrary, that this was permitted to be done for any Cauſe whatever, becauſe in the ſame Verſe, it is expreſſed, that, *if ſhe found not Grace* in her Husband's Eyes, ſhe was divorceable. This was the Queſtion which the *Phariſees* brought to our Saviour, thinking that he muſt have decided it, either againſt the Law of *Moſes*, or againſt the Determination of one of theſe two famous Schools, and, one Way or other, have become offenſive to the People; but our Saviour evaded all this, by reducing Matrimony to its original Inſtitution.

This is a Matter, which the *Heathens* themſelves ſeemed not unacquainted with; and therefore it is ſaid in *Hierocles*, that *Nature prompts us to Marriage, in that ſhe hath made us ſo, that two ſhould live together, and have one common Work to beget Children*; and that Tale of *Plato*, in his *Convivium*, *That Man, at firſt, was made Male and Female, and that, though* Jupiter *cleft them aſunder, there was a natural Love towards one another, and an Inclination to heal human Nature, by making one again of two*, ſeems to be only a Corruption of the Account in *Geneſis* of *Eve*'s being made out of *Adam*'s Rib.

The *Phariſees*, in their Reply to our Saviour, ſeem to intimate, that the Lawfulneſs of Divorces was founded upon a divine Command; *Why then did* Moſes *command to give her a Bill of Divorcement, and put her away?* But *Moſes* no-where commands, but only, in ſome Caſes, permits the doing of this; nor is the Deſign of the whole Precept to give any Encouragement to this Practice,

but only to provide, that (in caſe Men will be ſo perverſe and hard-hearted, as to turn away their Wives upon every ſlight Occaſion) the Thing might be done in a proper and publick Manner, not by Word of Mouth, but by Bill of Divorcement, delivered in Form, that, when the Woman is thus diſmiſſed, ſhe may not be quite ruined, but left at her Liberty to become another Man's Wife, *Deut.* xxiv. 2.

But here the Queſtion is, Whether this Diſpenſation excuſed the common Divorces among the *Jews* (which our Saviour looks upon as an Infringement of the primitive Inſtitution of Marriage) from all Sin, eſpecially that of Adultery, in the Sight of God? 'Tis granted indeed, that theſe Divorces were contrary to the Equity and genuine Intention of God's firſt Inſtitution of Marriage, but then it muſt be added, that God, by his Servant *Moſes*, had diſpenſed with his own Inſtitution; that under ſuch his Diſpenſation, there could be no Prohibition; and that, where there was no Prohibition, there could be no Tranſgreſſion; unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that God could forbid, and permit the ſame Thing, at the ſame Time. Our Saviour indeed, upon this Occaſion, preſcribes a new Law, which had not before obtained among the *Jews*; he retracts the Diſpenſation that *Moſes* had given; he reduces Marriage to its primitive Inſtitution; and, except in Caſes of Adultery, allows of no Divorces, but accounts them all null and invalid: However, under the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation it was not ſo. From the Permiſſion, given to the Women, when they were thus divorced, to be married to others, it is evident, that theſe Divorces quite diſſolved the Bond of Matrimony,

otherwiſe we muſt ſay, that God gave theſe Women, when they married again, a Toleration to live in a State of Adultery, and ſo, at long-run, the whole Commonwealth of *Judea* muſt, by a divine Permiſſion, have been filled with Adulteries and a ſpurious Offspring, which is incongruous to the Wiſdom and Purity of Almighty God to imagine.

The *Phariſee*'s Temper is ſufficiently diſcovered in the Form of his Prayer: *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.* This Stile is inſolent and boaſting; that of an Herald, rather than a Supplicant; and does not ſo much render God his Praiſes, as proclaim his own. But, admitting this lofty Opinion of his own Excellencies to be never ſo juſt, yet what Warrant or Privilege could he have, to diſparage and vilify his Brethren? *I am not as other Men:* What could be more fulſome Vanity, than thus to ſet himſelf off, as an Exception to a whole World at once? *Or even as this Publican:* To break *that bruiſed Reed*, and, with ſcornful Reproaches, to fall foul on a wounded Soul, whoſe penitent Sorrow called for the Compaſſion of every Stander-by. The *Publican*, quite contrary, in all his Expreſſions, in all his Deportment, ſpeaks nothing but Shame, and Confuſion, the tendereſt Contrition, and moſt profound Humility. He ſtands afar off, as not preſuming upon a nearer Approach to the Preſence of ſo holy a Majeſty. He lifts not up ſo much as his Eyes to Heaven, but, by the Guilt and Melancholy of his Countenance, takes to himſelf the ignominous Titles, ſo liberally beſtowed by his ſcornful Companion. He ſmites upon his Breaſt, as conſcious

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of the Pollutions lodged there; looks not abroad, but confines his Thoughts to his own Miſery; alledges nothing in his own Behalf, no Mixture of Good to mitigate the Evil of his paſt Life; feels no Comfort, ſeeks no Refuge, except in the Mercy of a forgiving God; brings no Motive to incline that Mercy, but a ſorrowful Senſe of his own Unworthineſs, and an humble Hope in God's undoubted Goodneſs: And therefore upon this, this ſaving, this only ſupporting Attribute, he caſts himſelf entirely, with a *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

Whether the *Phariſees* Queſtion to our Saviour, *When the Kingdom of God ſhould appear*, was put in Deriſion, becauſe, in his Diſcourſes, he had ſo often mentioned the *Kingdom of God*, or in ſober Seriouſneſs, becauſe, at this Time, they were in ſtrong Expectations of the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, and his erecting a ſecular Kingdom among them, is not ſo eaſy a Matter to determine. Their contemptible Opinion of *Chriſt* inclines ſome to think the former; but their generally received Opinion about the *Meſſiah* gives ſome Countenance to the latter: But, in whatſoever Senſe they intended the Queſtion, our Saviour's Anſwer perfectly fits them. Only we may obſerve, that, *by the Kingdom of God* here, the *Phariſees*, and our Saviour, meant two very different Things: The *Phariſees*, a *flouriſhing* Kingdom, wherein the *Meſſiah* was to reduce all other Nations under the *Jewiſh* Yoke; but our Saviour, a Kingdom of *Wrath* and *Vengeance*, which he deſigned to exerciſe even upon the *Jews* themſelves; and withal a ſpiritual Kingdom, which he intended to erect in the Hearts of Men by the kindly Operations of his Word and Spirit, when

his

his Goſpel ſhould be more fully propagated: For this is the Meaning of that Compariſon, *As the Lightning that lightneth out of the one Part under Heaven, ſhineth unto the other Part under Heaven, ſo alſo ſhall the Son of Man be in his Day*, ver. 24. He had told them, that the *Kingdom of God* was *already come among them*, and had appeared in the Purity of his Doctrine, and the Miracles, which he had wrought to confirm it, tho' not in that glaring Light, as to make them take a proper Notice of it; and here he tells them farther, that, after his Reſurrection, it would ſhine with ſuch a freſh and glorious Brightneſs, by the Effuſion of the *Holy Ghoſt* on his Diſciples, as would render it equal to the Splendor of the Sun ſhining from one Part of Heaven to the other, and cauſe it to be propagated, almoſt as quick as Lightning, through the World; and that then this *Son of Man*, ſo ſcornfully rejected by them, would alſo appear ſuddenly, and glorioufly, to revenge upon them their Infidelity, and the Affronts which they had offered to him.

The Diſtinction between *falſe Chriſts* and *falſe Prophets* is, that the former took upon them to be *Chriſt*, and came under that Name; the latter were ſuch as promiſed and foretold falſe Things. Amongſt the Number of the *falſe Chriſts*, who appeared in the Time prefixed by our Saviour, *i. e.* between his Reſurrection and the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, are generally reckoned, *Doſitheus*, who (according to *Origen*) gave it out, that he was the *Chriſt*, whom *Moſes* had foretold; *Simon Magus*, who bewitched the People by his Sorceries, and made himſelf paſs for *the great Power of God*, *Acts* viii. 9, 10 and alſo many more, whom the

Time

Time of the Advent of their King Meſſiah (as *Joſephus* expreſſes it) *prevailed with to ſet up for King.* Among the Number of *falſe Prophets*, who appeared in this Period, are likewiſe reckoned *Theudas* (not the Perſon mentioned, *Acts* v. 36.) who, in the Government of *Fadus*, promiſed his Followers, that he would divide the River *Jordan*, (as it was in the Days of *Joſhua* and *Elias*) and give them a free Paſſage. The *Egyptian Jew*, who, in the Government of *Fælix*, drew thirty Thouſand after him to the Mount of *Olives* where he promiſed, by his Prayers, to make the Walls of *Jeruſalem* (as thoſe of *Jericho* once did) fall flat on the Ground; thence drive the *Roman* Forces; and there fix the Seat of his Empire: A certain *Magician*, who, in the Government of *Feſtus*, led great Numbers of *Jews* into the *Deſert*, and promiſed them a Deliverance from all their Troubles; and ſeveral others, who taught the *Jews*, even to the laſt, to expect Help and Deliverance. Good Reaſon therefore had our bleſſed Saviour to caution his Diſciples againſt all ſuch Pretenders to a divine Miſſion, ſince, according to his Prediction, and, as *Joſephus* expreſſes it, *the Land, at this Time, was quite over-run with Impoſtors and Seducers, who drew the People after them in Shoals*; though the *Roman* Governors were ſo very ſevere, that there *hardly a Day paſſed, without the Execution of ſome of them.*

Lot's Wife, inſtead of making haſte to ſave herſelf, as the Angel had commanded her, out of a vain Curioſity, muſt needs *look back*, either regretting what ſhe had left behind her in the City, or concerned for thoſe that were deſtroyed in it, till ſhe was overtaken with the Flame,, and changed into a *Statue of Salt*, or into the Condition of a

Crops

Corps ſalted and embalmed, which continued, as a Monument of her Diſobedience, for many Ages after. And, in like Manner, if any of our Saviour's Diſciples neglected the Advice, which he here gave them, and continued in *Jeruſalem* when the *Roman* Army had cloſely inveſted it, they, very likely, were involved in the common Deſtruction.

The Words in the Text, *Whereſoever the Body, or the Carcaſe is, there will the Eagles be gathered together*, Matth. xxiv. 28. Luke xvii. 37. Theſe Words, which our Saviour here makes proverbial, ſeem to have been borrowed from that Paſſage in *Job*, where he ſpeaks of the Eagle in theſe Words; *ſhe dwelleth, and abideth on the Rock, upon the Crag of the Rock, and the ſtrong Place, from thence ſhe ſeeketh the Prey, and her Eyes behold afar off. Her young ones alſo ſuck up Blood, and where the Slain are, there is ſhe*, Job xxxix. 28, *&c.* Upon the Account of the Swiftneſs, the Strength, and Invincibleneſs of this Bird, no doubt it was, that the *Romans* made the Eagle their Enſign in War; and therefore our Saviour, by making uſe of this Expreſſion, gives us to underſtand, that the *Romans* would come upon the *Jews* with a ſudden Deſtruction; ſurround them ſo, that there ſhould be no eſcaping their Hands; and in whatſoever Country they found them, there put them all to the Sword. For the Eagle, mentioned in *Job*, is by Tranſlators rendered by a Word, which ſignifies a Vulture, a Bird conſecrated to *Mars*, becauſe it loves to feed upon Man's Fleſh, and therefore, by a kind of natural Inſtinct, *travels along with Armies, in Expectation of the Carcaſſes that fall there.* Nor is it an uncommon Thing for the Prophets to expreſs the *Day of God's Vengeance* under the Idea

The Cheef-Priests & Scribes offended with the Children crying Hosanna *to our Saviour.* Matt. 21. 15.

Idea of a *Feaſt*, which he hath prepared for the ravenous Birds and Beaſts of the Field; for thus ſaith the Lord, *Speak unto every feathered Fowl, and to every Beaſt of the Field, aſſemble yourſelves and come, gather yourſelves on every ſide to my Sacrifice, that I do ſacrifice for you, even a great Sacrifice upon the Mountains of* Iſrael, *that ye may eat Fleſh. and drink Blood, even the Fleſh of the Mighty, and the Blood of the Princes of the Earth.* Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18. *Vid.* Iſa. xxxiv. 6. *and* Jer. xlvi. 10.

Though it were Blaſphemy to think, that God acts upon the ſame Motives with the unjuſt Judge, in the Parable, yet this we may learn from the Nature of the Parable, that, if a Perſon, who neither fears God, nor regards Man, who hath neither any Senſe of Religion or Humanity, may be ſuppoſed to be ſo far prevailed upon by the earneſt Prayer of a miſerable neceſſitous Creature, as to grant the Requeſt made to him, and to adminiſter Relief to the Supplicant, meerly upon the Continuance and Importunity of the Petitions, that are put up; how much more ought we to think, that God, who is infinite Goodneſs itſelf, who is always kind and bountiful to his Creatures, who delights to do them Good, even without their deſiring it, and who is able to do them Good, with much leſs Pains, than they can requeſt it; how much more ought we to think, I ſay, that this God, upon our earneſt and hearty Prayer to him, (eſpecially if we be importunate, and perſevering in our Devotions) will return us a kind Anſwer, and grant us ſuch Supplies, ſuch Protection, or Aſſiſtance, as ſhall be needful for us.

We now proceed. Shortly after this *Jeſus* croſſed the River *Jordan* into *Perea*, where he was fol-

lowed again by vaſt Multitudes of People, whom he both taught, and cured of ſuch Diſtempers as they had, inſomuch that ſeveral of the Company, perceiving how ready he was to do Good to all that came unto him, brought their little Children with them, in order to partake of his divine Benediction; but his Diſciples, thinking it below the Dignity of their Maſter to be diſturbed, and interrupted by Infants, at firſt refuſed Admittance to thoſe who brought them; until *Jeſus*, having reproved them for ſo doing, and withal recommended the Innocence and Simplicity of theſe Babes, as a Pattern for their Imitation, commanded them all to be introduced, and, taking them up in his Arms, he laid his Hands upon them and bleſſed them, and ſo departed from the Place where this Tranſaction happened.

As he was on his Journey, a young Perſon of Diſtinction, who was very rich and wealthy, deſired to know of him, what he was to do in order to attain eternal Life. Our Saviour propoſed to him the Obſervation of the Moral Law, and remitted him, in particular, to the Commandments of the *Second Table*, as a certain Sign of his keeping thoſe of the *Firſt*; but when the young Gentleman told him, that all theſe he had made his Study to obſerve from his Youth, and our Lord, who knew his covetous Temper, and was willing to touch the ſecret Sore of his Mind, told him, that if he aimed at Perfection in Religion, his only Way would be, to ſell his Eſtate, and give it to the Poor (in Hopes of a greater Treaſure in Heaven) and to come, and be one of his Diſciples; the young Man went away very penſive and melancholy, being loth to part with his preſent Poſſeſſions for any Treaſure in Reverſion. Whereupon

our Lord, turning to his Diſciples, began to declare, what an inſurmountable Obſtacle Riches, without the Grace of God, were to any Man's Salvation, and that *it was eaſier* (according to the *Hebrew* Proverb) *for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* At which Expreſſion when his Diſciples were not a little ſtartled, to remove their Fears, he let them know that the Salvation of the Rich (tho' a Matter of ſome Difficulty) was not impoſſible with God, who could change the Hearts and Affections of Men, as he pleaſed.

When the Apoſtles heard their Maſter bidding the young Man, *ſell all, and give to the Poor, and follow him,* and promiſing him, for a Reward, a *Treaſure in Heaven,* they began to think, that poſſibly, it might be their Caſe, and the Promiſe, in like Manner, concern them; and therefore, when (in the Name of the reſt) *Peter* deſired to know of him, what Reward they were to expect, who had actually relinquiſhed *all,* and followed him; his Reply was, that, at the general Reſurrection, *when himſelf ſhould be ſeated upon his Throne of Glory, they alſo ſhould ſit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of* Iſrael; and that not only they, but all others likewiſe, who, for his, and the Goſpel's Sake, ſhould quit any worldly Advantages or Poſſeſſions, ſhould receive ſuch Comforts in this World, as would vaſtly ſurpaſs their Loſſes, and, in the World to come, eternal Life; But then, to ſhew them that ſuch high Rewards proceeded from the Bounty of Heaven, and no other Title, he repreſented the Freedom of God in the Diſtribution of his Favours, under the Em-

blem of a certain Maſter of a Family, ſending Labourers into his Vineyard, ſome ſooner, and ſome later, but giving them all the ſame Wages; wherein though he ſeemed kind to ſome, yet was he unjuſt to none, becauſe he paid them all according to his Agreement, and (having done ſo) was then certainly left to his Option, whom to make the Objects of his Liberality.

Here it may be proper to ſtop, to take a Review of this Period of our Story.

The Word *Perea* is derived from the *Greek*, which ſignifies *beyond*, and intimates *the Country beyond* Jordan, or on the Eaſt-ſide of that River. It was bounded (according to *Joſephus*) to the *Weſt*, by *Jordan*; to the *Eaſt*, by *Philadelphia*; to the *North*, by *Pella*; and to the *South*, by *Macheron*; and was a fruitful Country, abounding with Pines, Olive-trees, Palm-trees, and other Plants, that grow up and down in the Fields, in great Plenty and Perfection; and, in the exceſſive Heats, was well watered, and refreſhed with Springs, and Torrents from the Mountains.

The Parents, who brought their Children to *Chriſt*, were doubtleſs ſuch as believed him to be a *Prophet ſent from God*; and were perſuaded, that the Touch, or Impoſition of his Hand, would be of great Benefit to them, both to draw down a Bleſſing from Heaven upon them, and to preſerve them from Diſeaſes, which they ſaw him cure in Perſons more advanced in Years. We may obſerve therefore, that, tho' theſe Children were no more than Infants (as appears by our Saviour's taking them up in his Arms, *Mark* x. 16.) yet their Parents thought them capable of ſpiritual Bleſſings, and of receiving Advantage by our Saviour's

viour's Prayers. They, however, might bring them, with no farther Intent, than what is cuſtomary among the *Jews* even now, when they preſent their Children to any of their famous Doctors, *viz.* to obtain his Bleſſing; but, by the Reaſon which our Saviour gives for their Admiſſion into the Kingdom of Heaven, it appears, that he perceived ſomething in them (beſides their being Emblems of Humility) that qualified them to come unto him; and what could that be, but a Fitneſs to be dedicated to the Service of God, and to enter into Covenant with him early (as the *Jewiſh* Children did) by the Rite of Baptiſm (which was his Inſtitution) even as the others did by that of Circumciſion?

We muſt not imagine, becauſe our Saviour refers the young Man (who deſired to know what he muſt do to attain eternal Life) to the Precepts of the *ſecond Table* only, that therefore they are of more Obligation to us, than thoſe of the *firſt*; or that, by performing them alone, we may attain eternal Life: Our Lord has elſewhere determined, that the great Command of all, is, *to love the Lord our God with all our Heart*; and here he inſtances in thoſe of the *ſecond Table*, not only becauſe the Love of our Neighbour is an excellent Evidence of our Love to God, but becauſe the *Phariſees* (of which Sect very probably this Perſon was one) thought theſe Commandments of trivial Account, and eaſy Performance, and yet by ſome of theſe it was, that our Saviour intended, by and by, to convince this Inquirer, that he neither had kept, nor could keep them.

Since our bleſſed Saviour here requires of this young Man, not only to withdraw his Heart from

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an inordinate Love of his Poſſeſſions, but to ſell them all, and give the Money to the Poor, we may be ſure, that this was a particular Command to him, in order to convince him of the Inſincerity of his pretended Love to Life eternal, and not a Precept common to all *Chriſtians*. That there were rich Men in the Church, we learn from ſeveral Paſſages in Scripture, 1 *Tim.* vi. 17. *James* i. 10. and ii. 2. St. *Peter*, in his Speech to *Ananias*, permits *Chriſtians* to retain what is their own, *Acts* v. 4. and St. *Paul* does not injoin the *Corinthians* to ſell all, and give Alms, but only requeſts them to adminiſter to their Brethren's Wants out of their Abundance, 2 *Cor.* viii. 14. So that if Riches fall into the Hands of one, who knoweth how to uſe them to God's Glory, and the Relief of indigent *Chriſtians*, as well as to ſupply his own Needs, it ſeems a Contradiction to conceive, that God requires him to part with them, and to diveſt himſelf of any farther Opportunity of promoting his Glory, and doing Good to his needy Members. This Precept therefore of *ſelling all we have*, can only take place when we are in the ſame Situation with this young Man, *i. e.* have an expreſs Command from God ſo to do, or when we find that our Riches are an Impediment to the ſecuring of our eternal Intereſt; for, in that Caſe, we muſt part with a *Right-hand*, or a *Right-eye*, the neareſt and deareſt Things we have, *rather than be caſt into Hell-fire.*

There are three different Opinions among Interpreters concerning the Meaning of the proverbial Saying, of a Camel's going through the Eye of a Needle. Some imagine, that, at *Jeruſalem*, there was a Gate ſo very low and narrow, that a loaded

loaded Camel could not paſs through it, and that, by reaſon of its Littleneſs, it was called *the Needle's Eye*; but all this is mere Fiction, deviſed on purpoſe to ſolve the ſeeming Difficulty. The *Jews* indeed, to ſignify a Thing impoſſible, had a common Proverb among them, that an *Elephant cannot paſs through the Eye of a Needle*. Now our Saviour, ſay ſome, was pleaſed to change this Proverb from an Elephant (which was a Beaſt that few had ſeen) to a Camel, a Creature very common in *Syria*, and whoſe Bunch on his Back hindered him from paſſing through any ſtrait Entrance. But others, not able to diſcern any Analogy between a Camel and a Needle's Eye, think that the *Greek* Word here ſignifies a Cable, or thick Rope, which Mariners uſe in caſting their Anchors; and that the rather, not only becauſe there is ſome Similitude between a Cable and a Thread, which is uſually drawn through the Eye of a Needle, but becauſe the *Jews* (as the learned *Buxtorf* acquaints us) have a Proverb of the like Import, relating to the Cable, as they have to the Elephants; for ſo they ſay, that *as difficult is the Paſſage of the Soul out of the Body, as that of a Cable through a narrow Hole*. Whether of theſe two Interpretations takes place, 'tis a Matter of pure Indifference: Only we may obſerve, that the Application of the Proverb to the rich Man's entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, muſt not be underſtood abſolutely, but only ſo, as to denote a Thing extreamly difficult, if not impoſſible, without an extraordinary Influence of the divine Grace.

They were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, Who then can be ſaved? But why ſhould they ſtart this Queſtion, when there were apparently more Poor than Rich

Rich in the World? Theſe Poor, however, the Diſciples might think, were, by their Poverty, expoſed to as many and great Temptations, as the Rich were; and as the World, they ſuppoſed, was made up either of thoſe that were rich, or of thoſe that deſired to be ſo, from hence they collected the Difficulty for any to get to Heaven.

The Word, which in the Original, ſignifies the *general Reſurrection*, properly ſignifies a *new* and *ſecond* State, and is uſed among the *Pythagoreans* for the Return of the Soul, after it had left one Body, to take Poſſeſſion of another: And, agreeably hereunto, it is uſed, by ſacred Writers, to denote, either the future Reſurrection, which will be the Re-union of the Soul and Body, or that great Change, which was to be effected in the World, by the Preaching of the Goſpel, and more eſpecially, by the Miſſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, after our Lord's Aſcenſion into Heaven.

When himſelf ſhould be ſeated on a Throne of Glory, they alſo ſhould be ſeated on twelve Thrones, &c. ſome Interpreters refer theſe Words to that Authority, both in Matters of Diſcipline and Doctrine, which the Apoſtles, after the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, were, by the Lord's Commiſſion and Appointment, to exerciſe in the Chriſtian Church; but moſt underſtand them of the Honours that are to be conferred upon them in a future State. And here ſome have taken great Pains to determine, what Judgment theſe Perſons ſhall paſs, as, that they ſhall condemn the Errors of wicked Men by their Doctrines, and the Malice and Obſtinacy of Infidels by their Perſecutions, *&c.* while others have undertaken to aſſign them their Parts in the Proceſs of the laſt great Day, and repreſent them as ſo many Aſſeſſors to the ſupreme Judge,

Judge, ſitting upon the Examination and Trial of Mankind, while all the reſt ſtand at the Bar. But, tho' we are all well aſſured, that ſuch a Judgment ſhall be, yet, as to the particular Circumſtances and Formalities of it, the Scripture ſeems to give us but a ſlender Inſight; and therefore, ſetting aſide all dark Conjectures about this Matter, the moſt ſafe and probable Way of applying this Paſſage, is, to look upon it as ſpoken *after the Manner of Men*, to ſignify, in general, a brighter Crown, or more exquiſite Degrees of Happineſs and Glory. The Apoſtles accompanied, and ſtuck cloſe to *Chriſt* in his loweſt Eſtate: They kept the Faith, under the greateſt Preſſures and Temptations; they were indefatigably diligent, undauntedly conſtant in their Labours, and Sufferings for the Truth, and moſt eminently ſerviceable in advancing the Kingdom of *Chriſt* upon Earth; and therefore they ſhall receive an eminent Diſtinction in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Parable, of a certain Maſter of a Family ſending Labourers into his Vineyard, is, in a great Meaſure, taken from the *Jeruſalem Talmud*; where we have an Account of a King's hiring Labourers, and paying one, for a few Hours Work, the whole Day's Hire, which occaſioned great Murmuring among the reſt. It is our Saviour's Cuſtom we may obſerve, to make frequent Uſe of *Jewiſh* Proverbs in his Diſcourſes; and ſome learned Men have taken notice, that the Form of Prayer, which he taught his Diſciples, is chiefly compiled from the *Jewiſh* Liturgies. Since therefore he was to teach the People in a parabolical Way, he thought it no Diſparagement to his Parts, to imploy ſuch of their Parables, as were proper to his Purpoſe of illuſtrating the ſpiritual Matters of his Kingdom;

as well knowing, that theſe Parables, which were in common Uſe, and familiar to them; would be leſs offenſive, and better remembred by them, than thoſe of his own Invention.

Now let us return. Our Saviour had not been long in *Perea*, before he received a Meſſage out of *Judea*, from two Siſters in *Bethany*, *Martha* and *Mary*, of the dangerous Sickneſs of their Brother *Lazarus*, a Perſon highly beloved and eſteemed by him; but he propoſing, on this Occaſion, to manifeſt the Glory of God, as well as his own divine Power and Miſſion, by a greater Miracle than a ſimple Cure would be, delayed his going, until *Lazarus* was dead, and then ſet forward.

While he was in his Journey he took his Apoſtles aſide, and told them ſtill more plainly what the Event of it would be; namely, that at this Time of his going to *Jeruſalem*, the Chief-prieſts and Scribes would apprehend, and condemn him, and then *deliver him to the* Gentiles, *who would ſcourge, and mock, and crucify him*; but that, *on the third Day he would riſe again.* Upon the mention of his Reſurrection, which they vainly imagined would be the Beginning of his terreſtrial Greatneſs, *James* and *John*, by the Mouth of their Mother *Salome*, requeſted of him, to have the firſt Places in his Kingdom. The firſt Places in his Kingdom, he told them, were to be diſpoſed of according to the Pre-determination of his Father; but a proper Qualification for them it was, to be able to take the greateſt Share of the bitter Cup of his Sufferings, which very probably might be their Fate; and, when the Ambition of theſe two Brothers provoked the Indignation of the other ten Apoſtles, he declared to them all, that

that his Kingdom was far different from thoſe of this World, whoſe Princes and Governors ſtrove to exerciſe their utmoſt Power and Dominion over their Subjects; whereas, whoever expected to be great and chief among his Followers, muſt be a Servant to the reſt, according to his own Example, who came not to take State upon him, but to ſerve others, and even to lay down his Life for their Redemption.

Purſuant to our ſettled Method, we ſhall here explain what may ſeem difficult in this Period of the Story.

Bethany took its Name from the Tract of Ground wherein it ſtands, ſo called from the *Greek* Word which ſignifies the *Dates of Palm-trees*, that grew there in great Plenty. It was a conſiderable Place, ſituated at the Foot of the *Mount of Olives*, about fifteen Furlongs, or near two Miles, *Eaſtward* from *Jeruſalem*; but at preſent it is but a very ſmall Village. One of our modern Travellers acquaints us, that, at the firſt Entrance into it, there is an old Ruin, which they call *Lazarus's-Caſtle*, ſuppoſed to have been the Manſion-houſe, where he and his Siſters lived. At the Bottom of a ſmall Deſcent, not far from the Caſtle, you ſee his Sepulchre, which the *Turks* hold in great Veneration, and uſe it for an Oratory, or Place of Prayer. Here, going down by twenty-five ſteep Steps, you come, at firſt, into a ſmall ſquare Room, and from thence creep into another that is leſs, about a Yard and an half deep, in which the Body is ſaid to have been laid. About a Bow-ſhot from hence, you paſs by the Place, which, they ſay, was *Mary Magdalen*'s Habitation; and then, deſcending a ſteep Hill, you come to the *Fountain of the Apoſtles*, which is ſo called, becauſe (as the

Tradition goes) theſe holy Perſons were wont to refreſh themſelves here, between *Jeruſalem* and *Jericho*, as 'tis very probable they might; becauſe the Fountain is both cloſe to the Road's Side, and very inviting to the thirſty Traveller.

Our Saviour's Stay for two Days after the Meſſage, and modeſt Addreſs of the two mournful Siſters, kept them indeed a little longer in Suſpence and Grief; but it ſhewed his perfect Wiſdom and Goodneſs, as it made the wonderful Work more remarkable, and conducive to the fuller Conviction of the Spectators. Had he gone before *Lazarus* was dead, they might have attributed his Recovery, rather to the Strength of Nature, than to *Chriſt*'s miraculous Power; or had he raiſed him aſſoon as he was dead, they might peradventure have thought it, rather ſome Trance or Extaſy, than a Death or Diſſolution: But now, to raiſe a Perſon four Days dead, offenſive, and reduced to Corruption, was a Surprize of unutterable Joy to his Friends; removed all poſſible Suſpicion of Confederacy; ſilenced the peeviſh Cavilling, and triumphed over all the Obſtinacy of Prejudice and Infidelity.

In the Courſe of the Goſpel, we find our Lord forwarning his Diſciples, no leſs than three Times, of his approaching Sufferings and Reſurrection. The firſt Intimation of this kind was, in the Coaſts of *Cæſarea Philippi*; when, after St. *Peter*'s Confeſſion of him to be *the* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God, he began to ſhew unto his Diſciples, how that he muſt ſuffer many Things*, &c. The next, we meet with, was immediately after his Transfiguration in the Mount; when, as he came down from thence, with the three Apoſtles who were

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the Companions of his Privacies, he reminded them of what he had told them before, *viz. That the Son of Man ſhould be delivered into the Hands of Men.* The third Warning was that, which he gave his Apoſtles apart, when he was going to *Jeruſalem* to ſuffer, or, as ſome think, when he was going to *Bethany*, in order to raiſe *Lazarus* from the Dead: And 'tis obſerved of theſe ſeveral Warnings, that they riſe by Degrees, and grow more full and diſtinct, in Proportion as the Things drew nearer. Thus, the *firſt* is delivered in general Terms: *The Son of Man muſt ſuffer many Things, and be rejected, and ſlain, and raiſed the third Day.* The *ſecond* is inforced with this ſolemn Preface, *Let theſe Sayings ſink down in your Ears*; and the *third* deſcends to a more particular Deſcription of that tragical Scene, *He ſhall be delivered to the* Gentiles, *and mocked, and ſpitefully entreated, and ſpitted on; and they ſhall ſcourge him, and put him to Death, and the third Day he ſhall riſe again.* Now, whether we conſider the Danger the Apoſtles were in, of being oppreſſed with an Affliction, ſo ſenſible, as the Death of their Maſter; or the general Miſtake, wherewith they were infected, concerning the Splendor and worldly Pomp of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, or the Scandal that would neceſſarily ariſe from the Notion of a crucified Saviour, this Method of forewarning his Diſciples of what was to come upon him, was highly requiſite, to ſuſtain them in their Tribulation, to rectify their Sentiments, and remove all Offence, as it ſhewed, that his Death was voluntary, conſonant to the Predictions of the Prophets, agreeable to the Counſel and Appointment of God, and the Shame of his Crucifixion abun-

abundantly recompenſed by the Glories of his Reſurrection.

The Mother of *James* and *John* might be encouraged to ask the firſt Places in his Kingdom, upon the Account of her near Relation to the *bleſſed Virgin*, her conſtant accompanying our Saviour, and diligent Attendance upon him; and might conceive ſome Hopes of her Sons future Exaltation, from the pompous Name which our Lord had given them, and the great Privilege to which he had admitted them (but excluded others) of attending him in his Privacies.

It was anciently the Cuſtom, at great Entertainments, for the Governor of the Feaſt to appoint to each of his Gueſts the Kind and Proportion of Wine they were to drink, and what he had thus appointed them, it was thought a Breach of good Manners, either to refuſe, or not drink up. Hence a *Man's Cup*, both in ſacred and profane Authors, came to ſignify the *Portion*, whether of Good or Evil, which befals him in this World. Not unlike what we meet with in the *Pſalmiſt*, *In the Hand of the Lord there is a Cup, and the Wine is red; it is full mixed, and he poureth out of the ſame: As for the Dregs thereof, all the Ungodly of the Earth ſhall drink them out*, Pſal. lxxv. 8. And, what our Saviour means by this Expreſſion, we cannot be to ſeek, ſince, in two remarkable Paſſages, *Luke* xxii. 42. and *John* xviii. 11. he has been his own Interpreter, for *Lethale poculum bibere*, or to *taſte of Death*, was a common Phraſe among the *Jews*, and from them we have Reaſon to believe that our Lord borrowed it.

The Prediction concerning the Fate of *James* and *John* was literally fulfilled in St. *James*, who was put to Death by *Herod*, and ſo, in the higheſt

Senſe of the Words, was made to *drink of our Lord's Cup*; and, though St. *John* was not brought to ſuffer Martyrdom, yet his being ſcourged and impriſoned by the Council at *Jeruſalem*, put into a Cauldron of burning Oil at *Epheſus*, and baniſhed into *Patmos* for the Word of God, and for the Teſtimony of *Jeſus Chriſt*, may well be ſuppoſed to be ſome part of that *bitter Cup*, which our Saviour drank; and that he, who underwent ſuch Torments, as nothing but a Miracle could deliver him, may, with great Juſtice, be eſteemed a Martyr.

The Words in the Text, *The Princes of the* Gentiles *exerciſe Dominion over them, and they that are great, exerciſe Authority upon them; but it ſhall not be ſo among you: But, whoſoever will be great among you, let him be your* MINISTER, *Matth.* xx. 25, 26. and from hence ſome have inferred, that our Saviour forbids them, who will be his Diſciples, or the Subjects of his Kingdom, the Exerciſe of all civil and eccleſiaſtical Dominion. But if it be conſidered, that civil Government was, from the Beginning of the World, inſtituted by God (and therefore called *his Ordinance*, Rom. xiii. 2.) for the *Puniſhment of Evil-doers*, and for the Defence of *thoſe that do well*; that *Chriſtianity*, when it came into the World, made no Alteration in Things of this Nature, but left the Magiſtrate, after his Converſion, ſtill bearing the Sword, in the ſame Manner, as he did before; and that the Exerciſe of his Power is a Thing ſo ſacred, as to intitle, not only Princes, but even their deputed Miniſters of Juſtice, to the Stile of *Gods* in Scripture, it muſt needs be allowed, that what is reputed ſo honourable, and found ſo beneficial, ſo ſtrict a Bond of human Virtue, and ſo firm a

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Guard againſt all Kinds of Wickedneſs, can never be forbidden in any *Chriſtian* Commonwealth. And, in like Manner, ſince, among the Gifts diſtributed for the Uſe of the Church, we read of Governments, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. and find Mention made of *thoſe, who are ſet over us in the Lord,* 1 Theſſ. v. 12. to whom we muſt yield Obedience, and ſubmit ourſelves, *Heb.* xiii. 7, 17. ſince we find that the Apoſtles had *the Rod,* 1 *Cor.* iv. 21. and Power given of the Lord, to *deliver to Satan,* 1 *Cor.* v. 5. and to *revenge all Unrighteouſneſs,* 2 *Cor.* x. 6. and ſince, in the Nature of the Thing, it is every Whit as impoſſible, for a Church to ſubſiſt without Eccleſiaſtical Government, as it is for a State without civil, it muſt needs follow, that the one is as neceſſary, and of divine Inſtitution, as much as the other. All therefore that our Saviour can be preſumed to forbid in theſe Words, is, ſuch a Dominion, whether in Church or State, as is attended with Tyranny, Oppreſſion, and a Contempt of the Subjects, that live under it. Such, for the moſt part, was the Government that obtained in the *Eaſtern* Countries; and therefore, in Oppoſition to this, our ſpiritual Rulers are put in Mind, that they *feed the Flock which is among them, taking the Over-ſight thereof, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind, neither as being Lords of God's Inheritance, but Enſamples to the Flock,* 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. that their higheſt Station in the Church is not ſo much a Place of Dignity, as a Charge and Office, which ſubjects them to the Wants and Neceſſities of thoſe, they rule over; and that the moſt honourable Poſt they can have in his Kingdom, is only a larger Miniſtry, and Attendance upon others; for, *Who is* Paul? *who is* Apollo?

A Blessing pronounced on those who give Drink to the Thirsty.

Matt. 25. 35.

Apollo? *but Miniſters by whom ye believed,* 1 Cor. iii. 4. *For we preach not ourſelves* (ſays the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*) *but* Chriſt Jeſus *the Lord, and ourſelves your Servants for* Jeſus *ſake,* 2 Cor. iv. 5.

But it is Time we reſume the Hiſtory.

As he drew near to *Jericho,* attended with a numerous Company, one *Bartimeus,* who had long ſat by the Way-ſide begging, hearing the Noiſe of a vaſt Croud of People paſſing by, and being informed, that *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* was among them, with another blind Man, who begged along with him, called aloud upon *Jeſus* to have Mercy upon him. The People, who accompanied our Lord, ſuppoſing that the Man asked an Alms, bad him ceaſe his Noiſe; but the Benefit, which he deſired, was of greater Moment, and therefore he raiſed his Voice, and, with more Importunity, cried, *Thou Son of* David, *have Mercy upon me;* which when our Lord perceived, he commanded both him and his Companion, to be brought before him; and, upon their declaring what Favour they expected, he touched their Eyes, and immediately they received their Sight, and followed him, glorifying God, as indeed all the Company did, who had been Eye-witneſſes of this Miracle.

As our Lord was paſſing through *Jericho,* a certain Man, named *Zaccheus,* of great Wealth and Figure among the Publicans, was not a little deſirous to ſee him; but, as he was a Man of a low Stature, and could not gratify his Curioſity in the Croud, he ran before, and climbed up into a Sycamore-tree, where he could not fail of having a full View of him. When our Saviour came near the Place, he called him by his Name, and bad him come down, becauſe he intended to be his Gueſt that Day: Whereupon *Zaccheus* received him with

the greateſt Expreſſions of Joy and Reſpect, whilſt others could not forbear reflecting upon him, for entering the Houſe of a Man of ſo ſcandalous a Profeſſion. But, notwithſtanding all their Cenſures, our Saviour, who, from the Intuition of his Heart, as well as his own Declaration, knew him to be a juſt and charitable Man, pronounced him, and his Family, in a State of Salvation; and that he, tho' a Publican, and an Alien to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, was nevertheleſs one of thoſe, to whom the Promiſes made unto *Abraham* did belong.

The nearer they came to *Jeruſalem*, the more the Diſciples began to think, that *Jeſus* had taken that Journey to the Paſſover, on purpoſe to ſeat himſelf upon his Throne, and aſſume his regal Authority, and therefore, to cure their Minds of all ſuch Thoughts, he propounded a Parable to them "of a certain great Man, born Heir to a "Kingdom, and going into a far Country to take "Poſſeſſion of it; but, before he departed, calling "his Servants together, and giving each a Sum of "Money to trade withal, until he ſhould return. "The Reaſon of his Journey to this foreign Land "was, becauſe his own Countrymen, over whom "he had a Right to reign, were obſtinately ſet "againſt him, and diſclaimed him for their King: "When therefore he had obtained his new King-"dom, and was returned home, he firſt called his "Servants, with whom he had intruſted his Mo-"ney, to an Account, rewarding the Diligent with "Gifts proportionate to their Improvements, and "puniſhing the Negligent with perpetual Impri-"ſonment; and then taking Cognizance of his "Countrymen, who, upon his going to be in-"throned in another Kingdom, diſclaimed all Obe-

"dience

" dience to him, he ordered them, in his Preſence, " to be put to Death, as ſo many Rebels;" intimating hereby, both the Puniſhment of negligent *Chriſtians*, and the Deſtruction of the contumacious *Jews*.

By the Time that our Lord arrived at *Bethany*, *Lazarus* had now been four Days dead, and buried; and ſeveral Friends, and others, from *Jeruſalem*, were come to condole with the two Siſters, *Martha* and *Mary*, for the Loſs of their Brother. Upon the firſt News of our Lord's Approach, the two Siſters, attended with ſome of the Company, that was in the Houſe, went out to meet him; and, pouring out a Flood of Tears for the Loſs of their dear Brother, fell proſtrate at his Feet, and wiſhed, over and over again, that he had come a little ſooner, for then they were certain, that he would not have died. The Sight of their Tears and Sorrow, accompanied with the Lamentations of their Followers, affected the *Son of God* ſo, that he groaned within himſelf; and then demanding where they had laid the Body, he followed them to the Place, ſympathizing with their Sorrow, and weeping as well as they, which made ſome of the Company remark, how well he loved him, and others wonder, why he did not prevent his Death. When he was come to the Grave, and had ordered the Stone to be removed from it, after a ſhort Addreſs of Adoration, and Thankſgiving to his Father, (for his continual Readineſs to hear him) he cried with a loud Voice, *Lazarus, come forth*; whereupon he, that was dead, immediately aroſe from his Bed of Darkneſs, and in ſuch ſound Health, that, when his Grave-clothes were unlooſed, he was able to walk along with them to *Bethany*.

Here let us ſtop to explain the foregoing Paſſages.

Jericho was a wealthy City, in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, the firſt which *Joſhua* took from the *Canaanites*, and utterly deſtroyed, with a Curſe upon him who ſhould rebuild it, *Joſh.* vi. 26. In the Days of *Ahab* however, *Hiel*, a *Bethelite*, did rebuild it, and had the Curſe, pronounced by *Joſhua*, fully inflicted upon him, 1 *Kings.* xvi. 34. After its Reſtoration, this City was ennobled by the Schools of the Prophets, for its Situation ſeems to have been pleaſant; only the Misfortune was, that the Waters of a large Spring, which aroſe not far from it, were very unwholſome, and deſtroy'd the Fruitfulneſs of the Soil, until *Eliſha* cured it, 2 *Kings* v. 21. From which Time the Country, being well watered, became extreamly fruitful. It abounded with Gardens, and thick Groves of Palm-trees, and afforded great Quantities of Balſam, which was the beſt Commodity of the Place. The Country (according to *Joſephus*) is ſeated in a Plain, narrow, but long; for it runs out *Northward* to the Country of *Scythopolis*, and *Southward* to the Land of *Sodom*, being an hundred and fifty Miles in Length, and fifteen in Breadth, and ſeems to be the Place, which is called by St. *Matthew*, *the Region about* Jordan. As to the City itſelf, in the Time of the ſecond Temple, it yielded to none in all *Judea*, except *Jeruſalem* (from which it was diſtant about nineteen Miles) for it had a royal Palace in it, where *Herod the Great* ended his Days; an *Hyppodrome*, where the *Jewiſh* Nobility were ſhut up, on purpoſe to be ſlain after his Death; and an *Amphitheatre*, where his Will was publickly opened and read, with other ſtately Buildings;

Buildings; but, at preſent, it is only a poor naſty Village of the *Arabs*.

St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* both make mention only of one blind Man, the Son of *Timeus*, upon this Occaſion; but this they doubtleſs did, becauſe he was better known than the other, and bore the greater Part in this Tranſaction.

Whether *Zaccheus* was a *Jew* or a *Gentile*, our Commentators are not agreed. The Majority of them account him a *Jew*, but the Words of our bleſſed Saviour, *This Day Salvation is come to this Houſe, foraſmuch as he alſo is the Son of* Abraham, do very much incline us to think the contrary. Abraham *believed*, we are told, *and it was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs*: And therefore *Zaccheus* is here called his Son, becauſe he readily believed in the divine Miſſion of our Saviour *Chriſt*: *For the Seed of* Abraham *was not that only, which is of the Law, but that alſo, which is of the Faith of* Abraham, *who is the Father of us all.* 'Tis not to be doubted therefore, but that *this Day*, in Purſuance of our Lord's Declaration, *Zaccheus* was fully converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith; but whether he was afterwards ordained by St. *Peter* to be Biſhop of *Ceſarea* in *Paleſtine*, is not ſo very clear from Church-hiſtory; but that they, who advance this Notion, may be ſuppoſed to have confounded him with another *Zaccheus*, Biſhop of that Church, who lived in the ſecond Century.

The Parable of a great Man going into a foreign Country, to take Poſſeſſion of his Kingdom, we may obſerve conſiſts of two Parts. The former of which relates to the rebellious Subjects of this Prince, who *went into a far Country to receive a Kingdom*; the latter relates to this Prince's Ser-

vants,

vants, to whom he had committed his Money for them to improve in his Abſence; and the Explication of the whole is generally ſuppoſed to be this,——The Nobleman, or Prince here, is our Lord himſelf, the eternal Son of God; his *going into a far Country to receive a Kingdom*, is his *Aſcenſion into Heaven*, to ſit down at the Right-hand of the divine Majeſty, and take Poſſeſſion of his mediatorial Kingdom; his Servants may be either his Apoſtles and Diſciples, who, upon his Return, were to give an Account of the Progreſs of his Goſpel; or *Chriſtians* in general, who, for every Talent, whether natural or acquired, are accountable. His Citizens are, queſtionleſs the *Jews*, who, not only rejected him with Scorn, but put him to an ignominious Death; and his Return is the Day of his fierce Wrath, and Vengeance upon the *Jewiſh* Nation, which came upon them, about forty Years after this Time, and was indeed ſo very terrible, as to be a kind of Emblem and Repreſentation of that great Day of Accounts, when he will render *to every one according to his Works*. It is obſerved however, by ſome Commentators, farther, that our Lord took the Riſe of this Parable from the Cuſtoms of the Kings of *Judea* (ſuch as *Herod the Great*, and *Archelaus* his Son) who uſually went to *Rome* to receive their Kingdom from *Cæſar*, without whoſe Permiſſion and Appointment they durſt not take the Government into their Hands. In the Caſe of *Archelaus* indeed, the Reſemblance is ſo great, that almoſt every Circumſtance of the Parable concurs in him. He was this *Eugenes*, or Man of great Parentage, as being the Son of *Herod the Great*: He was obliged to go into a far Country, *i. e.* to *Rome*,

to receive his Kingdom of the Emperor *Auguſtus*. The *Jews*, who hated him becauſe of his cruel and tyrannical Reign, ſent their Meſſengers after him, deſiring to be freed from the Yoke of Kings, and reduced to a Province of *Rome*: Their Complaint however was not heard: He was confirmed in the Kingdom of *Judea*; and, when he returned home, tyrannized for ten Years over thoſe, that would have ſhook off his Dominion; but then there is this remarkable Difference between his Caſe, and that in the Parable, that the *Jews*, upon their ſecond Complaint to *Cæſar*, prevailed againſt him, and procured his Baniſhment to *Vienna*.

It was cuſtomary among the *Jews* (as Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us from *Maimodines*, and others) to go to the Sepulchres of their deceaſed Friends, and viſit them for three Days, for ſo long they ſuppoſed that their Spirits hovered about them; but when once they perceived that their Viſage began to change, as it would in three Days, in theſe Countries, all Hopes of a Return to Life were at an End. After a Revolution of Humours, which, in ſeventy-two Hours, is compleated, their Bodies tend naturally to Putrefaction, and therefore *Martha* had Reaſon to ſay, that her Brother's Body (which appears by the Context to have been laid in the Sepulchre the ſame Day that he died) would now, in the fourth Day, begin to ſtink.

The Time of mourning for departed Friends was anciently, among the *Jews*, of longer Continuance than four Days. For *Jacob* they mourned forty Days, and for *Aaron* and *Moſes* thirty: For Perſons of an inferior Quality the Days, very probably, were fewer, but ſome they had for all; and the general Term, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, was ſeven. During this Time, their Neigh-

Neighbours and Friends came to viſit them, and to alleviate their Sorrows with the beſt Arguments they could; they pray with them, they read with them the forty-ninth Pſalm, pray for the Soul of the Dead, and diſtribute their Comforts in Proportion to their Loſs; but no-body opened his Mouth until the afflicted Perſon had firſt ſpoke, becauſe *Job*'s three Friends, who came to comfort him, we find did the ſame, *Job* vii. 13. All which Ceremonies made the Concourſe to *Martha*'s Houſe, at this Time, the greater, and gave more *Jews* an Opportunity to be the Eye-witneſſes of her Brother's Reſurrection.

Our Saviour could not but know, who knew all Things, where they had laid the Body, yet he thought proper thus to ask, that, being conducted by them to the Sepulchre, there might be no Reſemblance of any Fraud or Confederacy.

The Words in the Text, *Some of them ſaid, could not this Man, who opened the Eyes of the Blind, have cauſed, that even this Man ſhould not have died?* ſome imagine, were ſpoken only in Admiration, that having given Sight to a blind Man, that was a mere Stranger to him, he did not cure his ſick Friend: But others conceive a vile *Sarcaſm* in the Words, and as if they went about to weaken his Reputation, in a Miracle, wherein he had manifeſtly ſhewn his divine Power, becauſe he did not preſerve his Friend from dying.

The common Form of a Burial-place, among the ancient *Jews*, was a Vault, hewn out of a Rock, ſix Cubits long, and four broad, in which eight other little Cells, or Niches (or, as ſome ſay, thirteen) were uſually made, as ſo many diſtinct Receptacles for the Bodies that were to be laid in them. The Mouth or Entrance of this Vault, was

cloſed

cloſed with a large Stone, which, whenever they buried any, was removed; and our Saviour here ordered the Removal of that which lay upon *Lazarus*, to make the Miracle appear more evident, becauſe it would have looked more like an Apparition than a Reſurrection, had *Lazarus* come forth when the Door of his Sepulchre was ſo firmly ſhut.

As our bleſſed Saviour, in Virtue of his Union with God the Father, had naturally, and in himſelf, a Power of working Miracles, there was no Need for his addreſſing himſelf to Heaven every Time that he did any: However, upon this, and ſome other Occaſions, we find him praying to God, under the Title of his *Father*, that all the Company might know, that what he did was by a *divine*, not *diabolical* Power; and that God, in granting his Petition, acknowledged him to be his Son.

Let us now go on the next Period of our Hiſtory.

This great and apparent Miracle cauſed the utmoſt Surprize and Aſtoniſhment among all the Spectators, and the greateſt Part of them were, from that Time, convinced, and believed on him; but others, more obſtinate, went and reported the Thing to the *Phariſees* at *Jeruſalem*, who thereupon called together their grand *Sanhedrim*, where, after ſome ſolemn Debate, it was concluded, "That, whether the Man was a *Prophet ſent from* "*God*, or not, for Fear of giving any Umbrage "to the *Roman* Powers, it was highly expedient "that he ſhould die, rather than that the whole "Nation, for his Sake, ſhould incur the Danger "of being ruined:" And, from that Time, they entered into a Combination to have him apprehended, and put to Death; but, as *his Hour was*

not yet come, at preſent he declined their Fury by retreating from the Publick, and retiring to a little Place, called *Ephraim*, in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, where he continued for a few Days, with his Apoſtles, until the Time of the Paſſover was approaching.

Six Days before that ſolemn Feaſt began, our Lord, in his Way to *Jeruſalem*, called at *Bethany*, where he was kindly entertained at Supper by the two Siſters of *Lazarus*, *Martha* and *Mary*. *Martha*, according to her Cuſtom, dreſſed the Supper, but *Lazarus*, whom he had raiſed, was one of the Company that ſat at Table with him; while *Mary*, to expreſs her Love and Bounty, took a Vial of the moſt valuable Eſſence, made of *Spikenard*, and, pouring it upon his Feet, anointed them, and wiped them with her Hair, ſo that the whole Houſe was filled with the Fragrancy of its Perfume. This Action *Judas Iſcariot*, who afterwards betrayed his Maſter, and had, at that Time, the Cuſtody of the Bag, wherein Money for charitable, and other neceſſary Uſes, was kept, highly blamed, as a Piece of Prodigality, in throwing away what might have been ſold for three hundred Pence, and given to the Poor; not that he valued the Poor, but becauſe he was a greedy Wretch, who was always purloining ſome Part of the publick Money to himſelf. Our Saviour therefore, who knew the Sincerity of *Mary*'s, and the Naughtineſs of *Judas*'s Heart, in a very gentle Reply, commended what ſhe had done, as a ſeaſonable Ceremony to ſolemnize his approaching Death, but blamed the other's pretended Concern for the Poor, ſince Objects of this Kind they had always with them, but his Continuance among them was not to be long.

While

While they were ſitting at this Supper, great Numbers of *Jews*, out of Curioſity, came to *Bethany*, not only to have a Sight of *Jeſus*, but of *Lazarus* likewiſe, whom he had raiſed from the Dead; but, when the *Sanhedrim* underſtood that the Reſurrection of *Lazarus* occaſioned many People to believe on *Jeſus*, they conſulted how to deſtroy him likewiſe. In the mean Time, *Jeſus* having tarried all Night at *Bethany*, ſet forward, next Morning, with his Diſciples, and others attending him on his Way to *Jeruſalem*. When he came to a Place called *Bethphage*, on the Side of Mount *Olivet*, he ſent two of his Diſciples into the Village, to bring from thence an Aſs, and her Colt, which was not as yet backed, that, to accompliſh a remarkable Prophecy, he might ride thereon to *Jeruſalem*. The Diſciples did as they were ordered; and, having mounted their Maſter on the Colt, he proceeded, as it were, in Triumph towards the City, amidſt the loud Acclamations of an innumerable Multitude, whilſt Crowds of People came forth to meet him, with Branches of Palm-trees in their Hands, ſome ſpreading their Garments in the Way, others cutting down Branches, and ſtrewing them where he was to paſs, and all, as it were, with one Voice, crying, *Hoſanna to the Son of* David! *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord!* Hoſanna *in the Higheſt!*

In this triumphant Manner they advanced, till they came to the Deſcent of Mount *Olivet*, when the whole Body of Diſciples, being tranſported with the Honours ſhewn to their Maſter, broke out into Raptures of Thankſgivings, and loud *Doxologies* to God, for all the mighty Works which they had ſeen; while the whole Body of the People, as well thoſe that went before, as thoſe

that followed after, joined with the Diſciples in their *Hoſanna's*, and Acclamations; ſo that, when ſome *Phariſees* being envious of his Glory, deſired him to command their Silence, *if they ſhould be ſilent*, he told them, *the very Stones would proclaim his Praiſe.*

But, notwithſtanding all this glorious Proceſſion, as he advanced nearer to *Jeruſalem*, ſo as to have a full View of the City, and Temple, he caſt his Eyes upon that wretched Place, whoſe deplorable Miſeries he foreſaw, and, with Tears in his Eyes, made this Lamentation over it; *Oh! that thou hadſt known, at leaſt in this thy appointed Day, the Things conducing to thy Peace; but now, alas! they are hidden from thine Eyes. For the fatal Time ſhall come, when thy Enemies ſhall throw up Trenches about thee, hem thee in on every Side, deſtroy thy Children, demoliſh thee, and not leave thee one Stone upon another, becauſe thou would'ſt not know the Time of thy Viſitation.*

Some explanatory Notes are here neceſſary.

The *Jews* ſeeing the Miracles which *Jeſus* did (this eſpecially of raiſing *Lazarus*) did greatly fear, leſt taking upon him the publick Character of the *Meſſiah*, he would attempt to make himſelf King, and, by the Admiration which he had gained among the People, be quickly inabled to accompliſh his Ends, unleſs he was timely prevented. If then he was permitted to go on in his Pretenſions, the Conſequence ſeemed viſible to them, that the *Romans*, to whom they were already ſubject, would look upon this as a Rebellion, and ſo be provoked to come with an Army, and deſtroy them utterly. That this was their Fear, is evident from the many groundleſs Objec-

tions

tions which they made againſt our Saviour, as that, *He forbad to give Tribute to* Cæſar, *and that he made himſelf a King*, and ſo oppoſed the Title of *Tiberius*. Not that they deſired the Continuance of *Cæſar*'s Dominion over them, but the Apprehenſion of a ſtill farther Conqueſt from the *Romans* made them unwilling to provoke them, and that more eſpecially, becauſe they had an ancient Tradition, that one *Armolus* (which is, by an eaſy Change, *Romulus*) before the End of the World, would come, and deſtroy them. This ſeems to be but the Depravation of ſome Prophecy from God, which foretold the Coming of the *Romans* in the laſt Days (meaning thereby the Days of the *Meſſiah*) to deſtroy them. It demonſtrates however, that they both believed, and expected that the *Romans* were the People, from whom the Change of their Religion, and the total Subverſion of their Government, were to come; and for this Reaſon they were, upon all Occaſions, ſo very fearful to offend them. But herein they were ſadly miſtaken; for the Prophecy of the *Romans* coming to deſtroy their Temple and Nation was fulfilled, not by their letting *Chriſt* alone, or believing in him, but by their thus oppoſing, and conſpiring againſt him.

Ephraim was ſituated between *Bethel* and *Jericho*, about twenty Miles to the *North* of *Jeruſalem*.

Some Interpreters are of Opinion, that the Supper at which our Saviour was entertained by *Martha* and *Mary*, was the ſame which he was invited to in the Houſe of *Simon the Leper*; that St. *John* has related it in its proper Place, as a Thing which happened ſix Days before the *Paſſover*; but that

that the other *Evangeliſts* have mentioned it by way of Recapitulation, to ſhew what might be the probable Occaſion of *Judas*'s Treachery, even his Vexation for being diſappointed of the Money that might have been made of this precious Ointment, had it been ſold, and put in the Bag for him to purloin: But others ſuppoſe, that this Supper was different from that which is mentioned *Matth.* xxvi. 6. and *Mark* xiv. 3. 1*ſt*, Becauſe this was in the Houſe of *Lazarus*, *John* xii. 2. that in the Houſe of *Simon the Leper*, *Matth.* xxvi. 6. 2*dly*, Here *Mary* anoints the Feet of *Chriſt*, ver. 3. there a Woman not named pours Ointment on his Head, *Matth.* xxvi. 7. 3*dly*, This Supper was ſix Days before the *Paſſover*, ver. 1. that, only two, *Matth.* xxvi. 2. *Mark* xiv. 1. and, if the Suppers were not the ſame, the *Mary* that anointed *Chriſt*'s Feet here, and the Woman that anointed his Head there, were not the ſame.

Nard, or *Spikenard*, is a Plant that grows in the *Indies*, with a very ſlender Root, a Stalk ſmall and long, and ſeveral Ears, or Spikes, even with the Ground, from whence it has the Name of *Spikenard*. The *Italian Nard* (if it be right) muſt be of a yellowiſh Colour, inclining towards Purple, with long Spikes, and the Briſtles of its Spikes large and odoriferous. Of the Blade, or Spike of this Nard, the Ancients were uſed to make a Perfume of great Eſteem, and, when genuine, very precious. *Pliny* tells us, there were nine ſeveral Herbs which imitated *Nard*, and that the great Price it carried, tempted many to adulterate it; but where it was found pure and unſophiſticated, there it obtained the Name of *Nardus piſtica*, which is the Epithet that occurs in *Mark* xiv.

xiv. 3. and *John* xii. 3. unleſs, as ſome think, it may be a Miſtake in the Copiers for *Spicata*.

As the *Roman* Penny was ſeven Pence Half-peny of our Money, ſo three hundred Pence muſt amount to nine Pounds ſeven Shillings and Sixpence, the Value of this precious Box of Ointment.

It was a Cuſtom, in theſe *Eaſtern* Countries, for Kings and great Perſons, to have their Bodies, at their Funerals, embalmed with Odours, and ſweet Perfumes; and, in Alluſion hereunto, our Saviour here declares of *Mary*, that ſhe, to teſtify her Faith in him, as her King, and Lord, had, as it were before-hand, embalmed his Body with precious Ointment for his Burial.

Never was there Rage and Malice more unreaſonable than that which prompted the Rulers to deſtroy *Lazarus*; for admitted that *Chriſt* had broke the *Sabbath*, and ſpoken Blaſphemy, yet what had *Lazarus* done? No Crime was ever alledged againſt him, and yet theſe Rulers of the People conſpire to put him to Death, merely to preſerve their own Honour and Reputation. But ſee the Providence of God, which, notwithſtanding all their Contrivances, was pleaſed to preſerve him, as a Monument of his Glory, and a Teſtimony of the Miracle which *Jeſus* performed on him, thirty Years after our Saviour's Death.

Bethphage ſignifies the *Houſe of Figs*, or *Dates*, and might, very probably, have its Name from the ſeveral Trees of theſe Kinds, that grew there. It was a ſmall Village of the Prieſts, ſituate in Mount *Olivet*, and, as it ſeems, ſomewhat nearer *Jeruſalem* than *Bethany*.

Mount *Olivet*, doubtleſs, had its Name from the great Number of Olive-trees, that grew upon it.

It lay a little without *Jeruſalem*, on the *Eaſt* Side of it, about five Furlongs from the City, ſays *Joſephus*, but he muſt be underſtood of the very neareſt Part of it, ſince St. *Luke* makes the Diſtance to be a *Sabbath-day*'s Journey, *i. e.* eight Furlongs, or a Mile, unleſs we ſuppoſe that he means the Summit of the Hill, from which our Saviour then aſcended, *Acts* i. 12. Mr. *Maundrel* tells us, that he, and his Company, going out of *Jeruſalem*, at St. *Stephen*'s Gate, and croſſing the Valley of *Jehoſaphat*, began immediately to aſcend the Mountain; that, being got above two thirds of the Way up, they came to certain Grotto's, cut, with intricate Windings, and Caverns, under Ground, which were called the *Sepulchres of the Prophets*; that a little higher up were twelve arched Vaults, under Ground, ſtanding ſide by ſide, and built in Memory of the Apoſtles, who are ſaid to have compiled their Creed in this Place; that, ſixty Paces higher, they came to the Place where *Chriſt* is ſaid to have uttered his Prophecy concerning the final Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and, a little on the Right-hand, to another, where he is ſaid to have dictated, a ſecond Time, the *Lord's Prayer* to his Diſciples; that, ſomewhat higher, is the Cave of a Saint, called *Pelagia*; a little above that a Pillar, denoting the Place where an Angel gave the bleſſed *Virgin* three Days Warning of her Death; and, at the Top of all, the Place of our bleſſed Lord's Aſcenſion.

It is well remarked by *Grotius*, that ſuch Animals as were never employed in the Service of Men, were wont to be choſen for ſacred Purpoſes, inſomuch that the very *Heathens* thought thoſe Things, and Sacrifices, moſt proper for the Service of their Gods, which had never been put to profane

Christ *Washing his Disciples feet is refused by* Peter. John. 13. 6.

profane Uſes. Thus the *Philiſtines* returned the Ark, in a new Cart, drawn by Heifers, that had never before undergone the Yoke, 1 *Sam.* vi. 7. But the chief Deſign, that our Saviour might have, in the Orders which he gave his Diſciples, was, that the Prophecy might, by this Means, receive its full Completion: *Tell ye the Daughters of* Sion, *behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and ſitting upon an Aſs, and a Colt the Foal of an Aſs.* The former Part of the Verſe is taken from *Iſa.* lxii. 11. and the latter, from *Zach.* ix. 9. Both by the *Jews* are acknowledged to relate to the *Meſſiah*, and, with regard to the latter, *R. Joſeph* was wont to ſay, "May the *Meſſiah* come, and may "I be worthy to ſit under the Shadow of the Tail "of his Aſs.

A great Conteſt there is among learned Men, whether our Lord rode upon the Aſs, or the Colt, or on both alternately. Thoſe, who contend for his riding on both, obſerve from the Words of the Prophet *Zechariah*, Chap. ix. 9. that mention is made of riding both *upon an Aſs, and a Colt, the Foal of an Aſs*; and from St. *Matthew*, Chap. xxi. 7. they obſerve farther, that the Diſciples having brought the *Aſs, and the Colt*, which our Saviour had ſent them for, *put on them their Cloaths, and ſet him thereon.* Since therefore the Relation of St. *Matthew* thus literally agrees with the Prophecy of *Zechariah*, and both expreſly aſſert, that our Saviour did ride upon the Aſs, as well as the Colt, they ſee no Reaſon, why theſe Texts ſhould not be taken in their moſt plain and obvious Meaning, and do thence infer, that, for the more exact fulfilling of the Prophecy, our Saviour did actually ride, Part of the Way upon

the one, and the remaining Part upon the other. The Generality of Interpreters, however, are againſt this. They ſuppoſe, that as there was no Occaſion for our Saviour's riding upon both, in ſo ſhort a Journey; and, as the other three *Evangeliſts* only make mention of the Colt, there ſeems to be a Neceſſity for admitting of the Figure called *Enallage Numeri*, in this Place; and that, as when we read, that the *Ark reſted on the Mountains of* Ararat, we underſtand only upon *one of them*; ſo here, when St. *Matthew* tells us, that the Diſciples brought the *Aſs, and the Colt, and put their Cloaths on them*, that is, *upon one of them*, i. e. the Colt, as the Words of the Prophecy itſelf will fairly bear: Nor was there any other Reaſon for bringing the Mother along with it, but that Foals will not uſually go without their Dams.

Very remarkable is our Saviour's Preſcience, even as to the moſt minute Matters, in the Orders which he gives his Diſciples, *viz.* 1. You ſhall find a Colt; 2. On which no Man ever ſat; 3. Bound with his Mother; 4. In *Bivio*, or where two Ways meet; 5. As you enter into the Village; 6. The Owners of which will, at firſt, ſeem unwilling that you ſhould unbind him; 7. But when they hear, that I have Need of him, they will let him go. And no leſs remarkable is the chearful Obedience of theſe Diſciples to a Command, which carnal Reaſoning might have ſtarted many Objections againſt, and which nothing leſs than a ſtedfaſt Perſuaſion, that he, who ſent the Meſſage, would be ſure to give Succeſs to it, could have prevailed upon them to execute, as they did, without any Demur, or Delay.

At

At the Feaſt of the Tabernacles, it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, not only to ſing *Hoſanna's* with the greateſt Joy, but alſo to carry Palm-Branches in their Hands, *Lev.* xxiii. 40. and to deſire (as the *Jews* ſtill wiſh, at the Celebration of this Feaſt) that they may rejoice in this Manner, at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*. Nor was it only at this Feſtival, but upon any other Occaſion of ſolemn Rejoicing, that the *Jews* made uſe of this Ceremony: For ſo we find, that upon the Enemies evacuating the Tower of *Jeruſalem*, *Simon* and his Men, *entered into it, with Thankſgiving and Branches of Palm-trees, and with Harps and Cymbals, and with Viols and Hymns, and Songs*. Nay, the very ſame Manner of expreſſing their Joy prevailed among other Nations, as well as the *Jews*; for ſo *Herodotus* relates, that they, who went before *Xerxes*, as he paſſed over the *Helleſpont*, ſtrowed the Way with Myrtle-branches: And, therefore, we need leſs wonder, that we find ſuch of the Company, as were, by our bleſſed Saviour's Miracles, convinced of his being their King, and the promiſed *Meſſiah*, teſtifying their Joy upon this his Inauguration into his Kingdom, in ſuch a Manner as they, as well as other Nations, upon ſuch joyful Occaſions, were accuſtomed to.

It was a common Practice, among the People of the *Eaſt*, upon the Approach of their Kings and Princes, to ſpread their Veſtments upon the Ground, for them to tread or ride over. In conformity to which Cuſtom, we find the Captains, when they proclaimed *Jehu* King, putting their Garments under him; and *Plutarch* relating, that when *Cato* left his Soldiers, to return to *Rome*, they ſpread their Cloaths in the Way, which was

an Honour (as he obſerves) then done to few Emperors. But the *Jews*, that accompanied our Saviour at this Time, looked upon him, as greater than any Emperor, as a Prince that was come to reſcue them from the *Roman* Yoke, and reduce all Nations under their Subjection; and therefore, in this Manner, they choſe to teſtify their Homage and Veneration of their univerſal Monarch, making now a publick Entry into his Capital of *Jeruſalem*.

Hoſanna, or rather *Hoſa-na*, is an *Hebrew* Word, which ſignifies, *Save, I beſeech thee*, and was a common Acclamation, which the *Jews* uſed in their Feaſt of Tabernacles, not only in Remembrance of their paſt Deliverance from *Egypt*, but in hopes likewiſe of a future one, by the Coming of the *Meſſiah*. Now the Reaſon why the Acclamations, upon this Occaſion, ran rather in theſe Words, than in the common Form of, *Long live the King*, or the like, was, becauſe in the Character which the Prophet gives of the *Meſſiah*, he is called a *Saviour*, or one bringing Salvation to them, *Zech.* ix. 9. And therefore, to ſhew the Excellency of this, above all other Kings, the People addreſs him in Words, taken from the *Pſalmiſt, Help us now, O Lord, ſend us now Proſperity*, Pſal. cxviii. 25. But, becauſe *Hoſanna* is likewiſe a Form of Bleſſing; and in the Inauguration of Princes, People are always pleaſed with the rightful Succeſſion; therefore they adjoin *Hoſanna to the Son of* David, *i. e.* the Lord proſper and heap Favours and Bleſſings upon him. Now, becauſe God promiſed the *Jewiſh* Nation a King, deſcended from that Royal Line, therefore they continue their good Wiſhes, *Bleſſed is he that cometh*

in

in the Name of the Lord; and becauſe again it is natural for Men, in ſuch Tranſports, to reiterate their joyful Acclamations, even, as if they deſired to make them reach Heaven, as well as Earth, therefore it is added, *Hoſanna in the Higheſt.*

Between Mount *Olivet* and the City of *Jeruſalem*, there lay nothing but only the Valley of *Jehoſhaphat*, through which ran the Brook *Kedron.*

The very Stones would proclaim his Praiſe, is a proverbial Expreſſion, and ſignifies no more, than that God was determined to glorify our Saviour that Day; and therefore, if theſe Followers ſhould be prevailed upon to hold their Peace, and ſay nothing in his Praiſe, God would find out ſome other Means (tho' not ſo competent, perhaps,) to make it effectually be known.

The Tears which our Saviour ſhed, upon his viewing the City and Temple, were ſuch as proceeded from a profound Charity, and deep Commiſeration of the Evils that were coming upon *Jeruſalem*; in both which Virtues he came to be an Example to us, and therefore his Behaviour, in this Reſpect, could not be unworthy of himſelf. They farther ſhew, that the Calamities which befel that impious City, might have been avoided, had they made a right Uſe of the Time of their Viſitation, otherwiſe, his Tears might rather be looked upon as the Tears of a Crocodile, than thoſe of true Charity and Commiſeration.

How exactly this Prediction concerning the Miſeries that ſhould befal *Jeruſalem*, was fulfilled by the *Romans*, we may learn by the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian; who not only tells us, that on this very Mount *Olivet*, where our Lord ſpake theſe Words,

the

the *Romans* firſt pitched their Tents, when they came to the final Overthrow of *Jeruſalem*; but that, when *Veſpaſian* began the Siege of it, he encompaſſed the City round about, and kept them in on every Side; that to this Purpoſe (how impracticable ſoever the Enterprize might ſeem) *Titus* prevailed with the Soldiers to build a Wall of thirty nine Furlongs, quite round the City, with thirteen Turrets on it, which, to the Wonder of the World, was compleated in three Days; and that, when this was done, all Poſſibility of eſcaping was cut off, and the greateſt Diſtreſs that ever befel a City, enſued, whereof that Author gives us a very lively, but moſt tragical Account.

How exactly this was likewiſe fulfilled, that *one Stone ſhould not be left on another*, the ſame Hiſtorian relates, *viz.* that *Titus* having ordered the Soldiers to lay the City level with the Ground, and to leave nothing ſtanding, but three of the moſt famous Turrets, that over-topped the reſt, as Monuments to Poſterity, of the *Roman* Power and Conduct in taking the Place; his Orders were ſo punctually executed, and all the reſt laid ſo flat, that the Place looked as if it had never been inhabited.

The Word *Viſitation* may be taken either in a good or bad Senſe; for either the Mercies or Judgments of God; but here it denotes the former, and particularly the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, firſt by the Miniſtry of *John*, then by the Preaching of *Chriſt* himſelf, and afterwards by the Labours of his Apoſtles and Diſciples.

DISSER-

DISSERTATION I.

Objections made to the Hiſtory by ſome Writers; Anſwered, by ſhewing the Time when, and the Manner how our Lord made his Entry into Jeruſalem. *The Reaſon of the Prophecy, relating to this Matter, explained and applied. An* Aſs *no improper Creature for our Saviour to ride upon: The Perſons that attended him, and the Reaſon of their turning ſo ſuddenly againſt him. Why three of the* Evangeliſts *have omitted the Account of* Lazarus's *Reſurrection. Why our Saviour wept at his Grave. No Deception in the Miracle of his Reſurrection; nor in that of his curing the Man that was born blind. Why the Hiſtory of the Woman, taken in Adultery, came to be diſputed: Its Genuineneſs.* Chriſt's *ſpeaking and acting not of himſelf: His calling Judges and Magiſtrates Gods, and ſeeming to deny his having any Hand in diſpenſing the Rewards in Heaven, no Argument againſt his Divinity. God's Juſtice cleared in the Diſtribution of Rewards. Why the* Samaritans *would not receive our Saviour. What is meant by* Rivers of Waters flowing out of his Belly.

SOME, no doubt, will object, that the Viſitation, mentioned the Cloſe of the foregoing Story, was, indeed, very extraordinary, when the great and long expected King of the *Jews* made his ſolemn Entry into the Capital

Capital of his Dominions, in ſo inglorious and abſurd a Manner. Had he been carried, indeed, in a triumphal Chariot, with the Nobles of the Nation attending him, and Heralds before proclaiming his great and wonderful Acts; nay, had he been but mounted upon a tolerable Horſe, with a little riding Furniture to ſet him off, and a Company of honeſt Yeomen, each on his own Steed, to make up the Cavalcade, ſomething then might have been ſaid to the Matter: But, to repreſent him riding upon an Aſs, the moſt contemptible of all Creatures, without either Bridle or Saddle, and nothing but an old Coat or two thruſt under him; without one Perſon of Figure in his Retinue, and nothing but a noiſy Rabble, running before, and bauling out, *Hey for our King, for our King for ever*; this is making ſuch a Farce of the whole Matter, and ſetting our Saviour out in ſo ridiculous a Dreſs, as but ill comports with the Gravity of his Behaviour, upon all other Occaſions. Well might the Town be in an Uproar, to ſee a King inaugurated in this mock Manner; and well might the Mob, when the Ferment of their Joy was over, reflect on what they had done, and turn their *Hoſanna's* into *crucify him:* But, what Colour of Excuſe can we make for the four *Evangeliſts*, who have all related this Part of our Saviour's Hiſtory ſo much to his Diſadvantage, and thence given Occaſion to ſuch an Exceſs of profane Wit and Ridicule?

Well had it been for their Credit, if the three firſt had omitted this Account of our Saviour's Entry, as they have done that of his raiſing up *Lazarus* from the Dead. In this St. *John* ſtands alone, but not without ſome Suſpicion of the

the Truth of his Narrative, when he repreſents the very Perſon, whom, in the Beginning of his Goſpel, he extolled ſo glorioufly, ſinking into a Paſſion, below the Dignity of ſome *Heathen* Sages, and fooliſhly weeping for the Loſs of a Friend, whom that very Moment he was going to reſtore; and when he repreſents his Friend, who *was dead, coming forth from his Sepulchre, tho' bound Hand and Foot with his Grave-Cloths*, (which is not ſo eaſy, one would think, to be done) and, at the ſame Time, having his Face (that it might not be known who he was) bound about with a Napkin.

Theſe Circumſtances look a little odly, and ſeem to impair the Strength of the Miracle; as our Saviour's curing the Man that was born blind (another Piece of Hiſtory, wherein St. *John* ſtands alone) by a kind of whimſical Eye-ſalve, made of Dirt and Spittle, ſounds not a little romantick; unleſs we may ſuppoſe, that underhand, he made uſe of a proper Medicine, and had privately, in his Mouth, ſome ſanative and balſamick Matter, which diſſolved in Spittle, might effect the Cure.

The Truth is, whatever high Commendations may be given of the Goſpel of St. *John*, as an Hiſtory greatly conducive to our Saviour's Honour, and calculated on purpoſe, as it were, to aſſert the Doctrine of his Divinity, yet it is no ſmall Objection to its Authority, that the whole Account of the *Woman taken in Adultery*, and brought before our Saviour, is ſuppoſed to be a Forgery, and therefore omitted in the beſt Copies; and if we look into ſome other Paſſages, during the ſame Period, we ſhall ſoon perceive that it

falls infinitely ſhort of the orthodox Character which ſome have given it.

For when, according to St. *John*, we find *Chriſt* declaring, that *He was to work the Work of him that ſent him; that the Doctrine which he taught, was not his own, but his that ſent him*; and that he *ſpake not of himſelf, but as his Father had taught him, ſo he ſpake*, can we think otherwiſe, than that he acknowledges his Inferiority to the Deity, as ſubject to the Command of another, which the true God can never be; and as receiving his Inſtructions from another, which had he a divine, beſides the human Nature, he muſt have been the prime Author of.

The very *Socinians* allow, that in reſpect of the Commiſſion, which he had from God, the Scriptures might indulge him with a Title extraordinary; and, when *the* Jews *took up Stones to ſtone him*, for aſſuming (as they thought) a Co-equality with God; how is it, that this beloved Apoſtle of his brings him off?

Why, by making him acknowledge himſelf to be God, in the ſame Senſe, and no higher than Judges and other great Magiſtrates are ſo called, *viz.* in Virtue of the divine Authority wherewith they are inveſted, *Is it not written in your Laws*, ſays he, *I have ſaid ye are Gods? If he called them Gods, to whom the Word of God came, ſay you of him, whom the Father hath ſanctified, thou blaſphemeſt, becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God.*

Nay, well it were, if St. *John* were the only ſacred Penman, who ſeems to impair the Truth of *Chriſt*'s Divinity; but if we look into two other *Evangeliſts*, we ſhall find them, on a very remarkable

able Occaſion, doing the ſame Thing. For, when the two Sons of *Zebedee* came and requeſted of our Lord, to have a certain Pre-eminence in his future Kingdom, theſe Writers make him modeſtly decline all Power of conferring ſuch like Honours and Dignities, as the peculiar Prerogative of God alone: *To ſet at my Right-Hand, and my Left, is not mine to give; but it ſhall be given to them, for whom it is prepared of my Father:* Words, that he never would have ſpoken, ſay the antient *Arians*, had he not been conſcious of an Inferiority.

But, even beſides theſe, there are other Difficulties, in the Compaſs of this Part of the evangelical Hiſtory, that we cannot ſo well account for. For, if Innocence is better than Amendment, and there is no Proportion in the Numbers, why is *there more Joy in Heaven, over one Sinner, that repenteth, than over ninety and nine juſt Perſons, who need no Repentance?* If the Judge of all the Earth cannot but do right, and will *reward every one according to his Works*, why does the Houſholder, in the Parable, make the Wages of all the *Labourers in the Vineyard*, of *thoſe that wrought but one Hour, and of thoſe that bare the Heat and Burthen of the Day, equal?* If our Saviour, at other Times, in his Travels from *Galilee* to *Jeruſalem*, met with no Lett, no Incivility from the People of *Samaria*, why did they once, merely *becauſe his Face was, as tho' he would go to* Jeruſalem, deny him the common Rights of Hoſpitality? And (to name no more) ſuppoſing the laſt was the greateſt Day of the Feaſt of Tabernacles; yet, why ſhould our Saviour, on that, more than any other, cry out, *If any Man thirſt,*

let him come unto me and drink, (tho' we cannot learn, from what Portion of Scripture he borrows it) we ſhould be greatly beholden to any, who would inform us, in what Senſe it is, that *he, who believeth in* Chriſt, *out of his Belly ſhall have Rivers of living Waters flowing.*

Thus far the Objections; to which 'tis anſwer'd, That at a former Paſſover, when the People, in Admiration of our Saviour's Miracles, would have paid him kingly Honours, he withdrew and refuſed that unreaſonable Teſtimony of their Zeal, becauſe the accepting theſe Honours then would have been liable to Miſrepreſentation, and might have obſtructed the Efficacy of his Preaching. But now, that the Courſe of his prophetick Office was finiſhed, and the Time of his leaving the World, and returning to his Father ſo near at Hand, he thought it not amiſs to accept of their Readineſs to acknowledge and proclaim his Royal Dignity, and himſelf to go up to *Jeruſalem*, in a more public Manner than uſual, that thereby he might exaſperate his Blood-thirſty Enemies, and ſo draw on his intended Paſſion.

To exaſperate his Enemies, indeed, a more pompous Appearance might have been more conducive, and more agreeable to his Regal Dignity; but in this our Saviour was not left to his own Option; ſince the Prophet ſo long before, had preſcribed the Form of his Entry into *Jeruſalem*, as a Characteriſtick of his being the true *Meſſiah*, there could be no deviating from it, even tho' he could have procured his numerous Guards, and triumphal Chariots, ſplendid Attendants, and other Enſigns of Royalty, to adorn the Day of his Inauguration. *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of*

Zion, *ſhout, O Daughter of* Jeruſalem, *behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is juſt, and having Salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Aſs, and upon a Colt, the Foal of an Aſs.* This is the Prophecy, whereby our Saviour was directed, at this Time, in his Approach to *Jeruſalem*; and, to juſtify his Conduct in this Particular, it may not be amiſs to enquire a little into the true Reaſon of it.

To this Purpoſe we may obſerve (with a learned Prelate of our own) that the Law which God gave to the Kings of *Iſrael* (whenever there ſhould be any) *not to multiply Horſes to themſelves*, was founded upon a ſpecial Promiſe, that he would continue to be (as he had all along been) their Defence againſt their Enemies; that this was a Law, wherein every Prince, that was to ſucceed to the Government of *Iſrael*, was concerned, and deſigned for a ſtanding Trial, both of Prince and People, whether they had Truſt and Confidence in God; that while this Law was obſerved, the Troops of *Iſrael* were victorious, and, tho' few in Number, and ſeemingly unfit for Action, proved an Overmatch for Royal Armies; that when it came to be laid aſide, and Kings, as they declined in their Confidence towards God, began to *multiply their Horſes and Chariots* of War, they ſoon ſunk in their military Succeſſes, till at length the whole Land was carried away captive: And therefore *Woe unto them*, ſays the Prophet, *that ſtay on Horſes, and truſt in Chariots, becauſe they are many, and in Horſemen, becauſe they are ſtrong, but look not unto the* Holy One of Iſrael, *neither ſeek the* Lord.

Now, to apply this to the Prophecy before us. Since the Kings of *Iſrael* were obliged to renounce

nounce the Aſſiſtance of Horſes and Horſemen, and to depend on God for Succeſs in the Day of Battle; and ſince thoſe, who did ſo, were their Nation's Deliverers, and thoſe that did otherwiſe, were Deſtroyers of it; under which of theſe Capacities, think we, ſhould the King, whom God promiſed to the Daughter of *Jeruſalem*, come? Should he appear (as ſome of the late Kings of *Iſrael* did) in all the Pomp and Pride of War, ſurrounded with Horſes and Chariots, in direct Oppoſition to the Law of God? Or ſhould he appear, like ſome of the antient *Worthies, who by Faith ſubdued Kingdoms, and out of Weakneſs were made ſtrong*: Kings, who feared God, and therefore feared no Enemy; and who, tho' mounted on Aſſes, were able to put to Flight the thouſands and ten thouſands of Chariots and Horſes that came againſt them. To reſolve us in this Enquiry, the Prophet himſelf comes in to our Aid, for, immediately after his Deſcription of the promiſed King, he adds, *and I will cut off the Chariot from* Ephraim, *and the Horſe from* Jeruſalem, plainly ſhewing that the Character given of the *Meſſiah*, viz. *that he ſhould ride on an Aſs*, was in Oppoſition to the Pride of their warlike Kings, who by their Strength in Chariots and Horſes, had ruined themſelves and their People.

Thus neceſſary it was for the promiſed *Meſſiah*, and for our Saviour conſequently, who came in that Character to approach the *Daughter of* Zion, riding on an Aſs, even tho' it were a Creature more deſpicable than we imagine it. But after all, it is mere Prejudice, and too fond an Attachment to the Manners and Cuſtoms of our Country, that make us conceive any Thing contemptible in

an Aſs; or any Thing ridiculous or inconſiſtent with the Gravity and Dignity of our bleſſed Saviour, in riding upon one. For if we look into other Countries, particularly into *Judea*, we ſhall find Perſons, of the higheſt Diſtinction, uſually ſo mounted. We ſhall find the chief Governors of *Iſrael*, deſcribed in the *Song of* Deborah, *as riding on white Aſſes*; the thirty Sons of *Jair*, who was Judge and Prince of the Country, for two and twenty Years, riding upon as many Aſſes, and commanding in thirty Cities. Nay, we ſhall find *Abſalom* (tho' in other Reſpects a Man of Pomp,) in the very Day of Battle, mounted on a Mule, the Colt of an Aſs; and, on his Coronation-day, *Solomon* provided with no better Equipage: And therefore we can never account it any Reproach, for the meek and humble *Jeſus*, to ride into *Jeruſalem* on the Foal of an Aſs, when *David*, the greateſt of his Anceſtors, and *Solomon*, the wiſeſt (as long as he was wiſe) rode in the ſame Manner.

The Perſons, who attended him in this Proceſſion, were a mixed Multitude, conſiſting of Diſciples and common People, ſuch as were moved to do thus, from the Doctrines and Miracles which they had heard and ſeen, and were forward to pay him what Honour they could. They had no Quality or outward Splendor, nor indeed, no Titles or eminent Poſts to recommend them, but they were very remarkable for their Sincerity and honeſt Zeal, their hearty Affection to *Chriſt*, and firm Perſuaſion of his being the true *Meſſiah*; and theſe, to him, who is no Reſpector of Perſons, and who came to ſet up a *Kingdom, not of this World*, rendered thoſe Tributes of Praiſe and Acknow-

Acknowledgment, tho' from Men mean and inſignificant, as to any temporal Reſpects, more acceptable, more becoming his Character, and more truly for his Honour, than any diſſembled or intereſted Homage of Rulers or Rabbins, the greated or wiſeſt of the *Sanhedrim*, could have been; for external Advantages are of no Conſideration with God, while they want good Diſpoſition within to recommend them.

Whether this was the ſame Multitude, or another ſpirited up, that clamoured ſo loudly againſt our Bleſſed Saviour, but five Days after theſe joyful Exclamations, 'tis much to be queſtioned; but, ſuppoſing it was, whoever conſiders the ſubtle Management of Men in Poſt and Power, and the Eaſineſs and ſervile Fears, uſual in thoſe of a mean depending Condition, will not be much ſurprized at ſuch a ſudden Change; but from hence he may ſatisfy himſelf, what very Reeds the Affections of the People are, and how apt they are to bend to every Wind of Faction and Intereſt, and malicious Inſinuation, even when moſt zealous, and ſeemingly moſt ſincere.

If we take a View of the vaſt Extent of the Subject, which the *Evangeliſts* had before them, and the intended Brevity of their Books, to make them more uſeful to the Generality of Mankind, we cannot but perceive, that it was abſolutely neceſſary for them to omit ſeveral Things which muſt have occurred to their Remembrance. The whole four Goſpels, bound together, make not a large Volume, but each, ſingly, is a very ſmall Book; and yet, beſides the Miracles of our Saviour, attended, as they are, with the Circumſtances

of

Our Saviour being Crown'd with Thorns
Pilate *Shews him to the People*. John. 19. 5. 6.

of Place and Time, the Names of the Perſons, and the Occaſions of their being wrought, they have, in theſe ſmall Tracts, inſerted an Account of the wonderful Manner of our Saviour's Birth, the Dangers of his Infancy, the miraculous Appearances of Providence, in his Favour, and his Removals, and Journeyings from one Place and Country to another. They have recorded the Subſtance of his Doctrine, in plain Terms; have ſet down many Parables, ſpoken by him, together with their Explications; and given us a full Account of the Miſſion of his twelve Apoſtles, and the other ſeventy Diſciples. The Cavils and Queſtions of the *Phariſees*, *Sadducees*, and *Herodians*, together with his Anſwers and Solutions; the Obſervations and Reflections of the People; his publick Diſcourſes before all, and his private Inſtructions to his Diſciples; his Predictions of his own Sufferings; of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and many other Events; a long and particular Account of his Perſecution, Condemnation and Crucifixion, as alſo of his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion; not to mention the Hiſtory of the Birth, Preaching, Baptiſm and Sufferings of *John the Baptiſt*, his Fore-runner, are all comprized in a ſhort Volume. And therefore, having ſuch Plenty of Matter before them, they were obliged to be ſilent, as to ſome Particulars, after they had related others of the like Nature, for fear of incurring that Prolixity, which they had determined to avoid. And hence it is eaſy to ſuppoſe, in Behalf of the three firſt *Evangeliſts*, that when they came to a certain Period of their Hiſtory, of the Miniſtry of *Jeſus*, and obſerved, that they had given a ſufficient Account of his Doctrine and Miracles, being to reſerve a Space for his laſt

Sufferings and Reſurrection, they thought proper to paſs over in Silence, whatever happened between that Period, and his laſt Journey to *Jeruſalem*. Thus ſome have obſerved, that from the Time, when our Saviour returned into the Coaſts of *Judæa* beyond *Jordan*, which (as St. *John* tells us) was ſoon after the *Feaſt of the Dedication* (and that was always obſerved in Winter) to the Time of his laſt going up to *Jeruſalem*, a little before *Eaſter*: Theſe three *Evangeliſts* make no mention at all of any Journies or Movings from thence; and yet, from this Country, (according to St. *John*'s Account) it was, that *Jeſus* afterwards came up to *Bethany*, and raiſed *Lazarus*, and then *went into the Country near the Wilderneſs, in a City called* Ephraim, *and their continued with his Diſciples*: And therefore, ſince theſe ſacred Penmen, for the Avoiding of Prolixity, thought it not proper to take any Notice of what paſſed in this Interval of Time, they could not, (with any Juſtneſs or Propriety) introduce into their Goſpels, an Account of the Reſurrection of *Lazarus*.

But there is a farther Reaſon, which ſome learned Men have given us, for their Silence in this Reſpect. They tell us, that, according to an antient Tradition, *Lazarus* lived thirty Years after his being raiſed from the Dead; and that, as the lateſt of theſe three *Evangeliſts* wrote but fifteen Years after our Lord's Aſcenſion, they might think it a needleſs Matter, to mention a Miracle concerning a Perſon living ſo near *Jeruſalem*, when the Fame of it was ſo great, and ſo many Witneſſes living to atteſt it: Nor can they ſuppoſe, but that, in Point of Prudence, the *Evangeliſts* declined mentioning this Story, for fear of exaſperating the

Jews,

Jews, and giving their Rage and Malice a freſh Provocation to cut off *Lazarus*, and moſt of the Witneſſes, who were preſent at his Reſurrection; but when St. *John* wrote his Goſpel, the Fame of it might be much impaired, wherefore he had good Reaſon to perpetuate its Memory by a full and particular Rehearſal.

He had not, however, given us ſo fair and unexceptionable an Account of the Matter, had he not repreſented our bleſſed Saviour compaſſionating the Circumſtances of his Friends, and weeping upon ſo ſad an Occaſion; for "There is "ſomething in human Nature (as an ingenious "Author elegantly expreſſes it) reſulting from "our very Make and Conſtitution, while it re"tains its genuine Form, and is not altered by "vicious Habits, or oppreſſed by Stupidity, "which renders us obnoxious to the Pains of "others, cauſes us to ſympathize with them, and "almoſt comprehends us in their Caſe. This "Compaſſion appears eminently in thoſe, who, "upon other Accounts, are juſtly reckoned among "the beſt of Men. They, who of all Writers, "undertake to imitate Nature moſt, often intro"duce, even their Heroes weeping. The Tears "of Men are, in truth, very different from the "Cries and Ejaculations of Children; they are "ſilent Streams, and flow from other Cauſes; "commonly ſome tender, and, perhaps, philo"ſophical Reflections." And in the Caſe now before us, there might be other Conſiderations, beſides the Loſs of *Lazarus*, and the Lamentation of his Friends, that might draw from our Saviour theſe Tears of Compaſſion.

He might, at that Time, be affected with the Thought of the many Afflictions to which hu-

man Nature is liable, in this imperfect State; and his Groans and inward Grief, might proceed from the Want of Faith, obſervable in the Siſters and Company attending them, and a Diffidence of his Ability to raiſe the Dead, notwithſtanding they had ſeen ſo many, and ſo frequent Manifeſtations of a Divine and omnipotent Power reſiding in him. He knew that the Obſtinacy and inveterate Prejudices of ſome of the Spectators, and of the Generality of the *Jewiſh* People was ſuch, that the aſtoniſhing Miracle, he was going to work, would not have its due Effect upon them. This recalled to his Mind that Scene of Miſery and Deſolation, which he foreſaw would overtake them, and therefore he grieved, and ſighed deeply at the Proſpect of the Calamities which that perverſe People were bringing upon themſelves, and which all his Endeavours, his Miracles, and Sufferings could not prevent. So that, upon the Whole, the Concern which our Lord expreſſed upon this Occaſion, proceeded from the nobleſt Motives, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Friendſhip, Compaſſion, and every View that is juſt and laudable, when he ſymphathized with his Friends, and grieved for his Enemies.

With theſe genuine Expreſſions of ſolemn Grief and Sorrow, our Saviour drew near to his Friend's Sepulchre, which, as we may conjecture, was an hollow Place hewn in a Rock, whoſe Entrance (which was cloſed with a Stone) lay level with the Surface of the Earth: But then we have ſo imperfect an Account of the funeral Habits, that were in Uſe among the *Jews*, that we can form no Notion, how far *Lazarus*, when revived and ſet upon his Feet, might be able, of himſelf

himſelf, to walk to the Tomb. In this, however, we may ſatisfy ourſelves, that our Saviour, who was able to recal his Soul from its ſeparate State, and convey freſh Life into his Body almoſt putrified, could give that Body, tho' bound Hand and Foot, a Power of moving forward, even tho' we ſuppoſe (as moſt of the Antients do) that herein he put himſelf to the Expence of a ſecond Miracle, becauſe the proper Demonſtration of the Reality of the Reſurrection was, not to ſend any Body into the Tomb, to unbind him, which might occaſion a Suſpicion of a clandeſtine Practice, but to have him come forth alive, in the Preſence of all the Spectators, fairly and without any Change or Alteration in his funeral Dreſs, but what was made before the People themſelves, by our Saviour's ſaying, *Looſe him, and let him go.*

That ſome or other in the Company was ready enough, upon this Occaſion, to obey our Lord's Commands can hardly be doubted; and therefore it is very wonderful that (had there been any Colluſion in the Matter) among ſo great a Multitude, no one ſhould have had Sagacity enough to find it out. But the Truth is, they none of them ſuſpected any ſuch Thing; they none of them thought, that when a Man had been four Days buried, there wanted any Proof of his being dead; they none of them thought that *Chriſt* was only a pretended Worker of Miracles; for how unwilling ſoever they were to own him for their *Meſſiah*, by long Experience they were convinced, that he was a Perſon *mighty in Word and Deed.*

Of all the wonderful Deeds, that we find recorded of him, there is none, I think, that is related ſo fully, and ſet off with ſo many Circumſtances,

cumſtances, to prevent the leaſt Suſpicion of Fraud, as that of his curing the Man, who was born blind. The *Evangeliſt* has expended a whole Chapter upon it, and therein acquainted us with ſome previous Queſtions of his Diſciples, which led to it, the uncommon Manner of his performing it; the Surprize and Aſtoniſhment of the blind Man's Neighbours, when they ſaw ſuch an Alteration wrought in him; the Man's open and undiſguiſed Relation of the Matter, and repeated Atteſtation of the Greatneſs and Reality of the Cure; the great Diſturbance and Perplexity which he gave the *Jews*, their examining and croſs-examining the Man, who ſtill continued firm and uniform in his Account; their tampering with his Parents, who avowed the Truth of his being born blind; and at laſt (when they ſaw that they could prevail nothing, but the more they examined, the more Evidence they found) their Rage and Malice, carried them to ſuch a Degree, as to excommunicate the poor Man, and caſt him out of their Synagogue. Theſe and ſome more Circumſtances are told in ſuch a plain, convincing Manner, as ſhews the whole Story to be too well founded, for any Cavils or Fictions to weaken or impair.

Our Saviour might have had ſome ſanative Balſam in reſerve; but would all the Balſam in the World have availed towards the Cure of the Diſtemper we are now conſidering. Phyſicians and Surgeons, that have ſtudied the Texture of the Eye, and made the Cure of its Maladies their chief Employ, may give us, indeed, ſomething that will ſtrengthen the Optic Nerves, when weakned or relaxed, or by ſome outward Operation,

may

may removed ſuch Obſtructions, as would otherwiſe impede the Sight: *But, ſince the World began* (as the poor Man here excellently argues) *was it every heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one, that was born blind?* and (as he might have added) by a Medicine ſo incongruous, as a Plaiſter of Clay, becauſe the Uncommonneſs of the Application is ſo far from diminiſhing, that it rather raiſes the Credit and Reputation of the Miracle; at leaſt it muſt be allowed to be as great and triumphant a Diſplay of a ſuper-natural Power, to work a Cure, by Means that have no Fitneſs to that End, as it is to do it without any Means at all. In the former Caſe, the Perſon who undertakes the Cure, has only the Diſtemper to contend with; but here he has a double Difficulty to conquer, and muſt not only controul the Power of the Diſeaſe, but change the repugnant Qualities of Bodies, and make them productive of quite contrary Effects. Tho' therefore the Method, which our Saviour made Uſe of, upon this Occaſion, was of no Significance, as to the Cure of the Man's Blindneſs; yet, was it nevertheleſs highly pertinent, in order to convince the Spectactors, as well as the Patient himſelf, of his Almighty Power, which could produce ſuch a wonderful Effect, by no other Application, but what was indifferent, if not obſtructive to the Cure.

Some of the antient Fathers were ſo rigid in their Cenſures againſt Adultery, that they would not admit any Perſons, convicted thereof, into the Communion of the Church, even after the longeſt Penance; and carried their Zeal and Reſentment to ſuch an Height, as to think it no great harm to kill them. No Wonder then, if Men of ſuch ſevere Opinions, were unwilling to admit into the Canon

Canon of Scripture, the Hiſtory of the Woman taken in this Crime, becauſe, as they imagined, it gave Permiſſion to Lewdneſs; ſince our Saviour ſent her away without condemning her; whereas *Chriſt*, in his preſent Circumſtances, had no Commiſſion to paſs Sentence upon her, tho' in bidding her go, and, for Fear of the divine Judgment, repent and ſin no more, he ſufficiently declared himſelf againſt all ſuch Practices.

Upon a different Perſuaſion, however, it was, that this Paſſage came, at firſt, to be marked as dubious, and in Time quite thrown out as ſpurious. In many antient, eſpecially *Greek* Copies: But, in Oppoſition to this, we need only obſerve, that this Part of Hiſtory was found in the ſixteen Manuſcripts, which *Stephanus*, in all the ſeven (ſave one) which *Beza*, and in that infinite Number, which our learned *Mills* has made uſe of; that *Tatian*, 160, *i. e.* ſixty Years after the Death of St. *John*, and *Ammianus* of *Alexandria*, who flouriſhed about the Year 220, and made their ſeveral Harmonies of the Goſpel out of the Copies then in Uſe, do both (as appears from the *Canons* of *Euſebius*) relate it; that moſt of the Copies of the *Eaſt* (according to *Selden*'s Report) retain it; and tho' it be not found in ſome Manuſcripts (as the *Greek Code*, cited by *Cotelerius*, expreſſes the Matter, yet it is intire in the antient Manuſcripts, and all the Apoſtles make mention of it, in the Conſtitutions which they ſet forth for the Edification of the Church.

This is enough to vindicate the Truth and Sincerity of this Part of St. *John*'s Hiſtory from the Cenſures of Criticks, who ſuſpected it; and, to reſcue his Doctrine from ſuch falſe Conſtructions, as the Adverſaries of our Lord's Divinity would put

put upon it, we need only be mindful to diſtinguiſh between his divine and human Nature, and not to apply ſuch Words and Actions of his, as relate to the one, to the Prejudice of the other. Thoſe who deny the Deity of *Chriſt*, do nevertheleſs acknowledge, that he was a Prophet ſent from God, and inveſted with an high Commiſſion. Now, under this Character he could only appear and act, in virtue of his human Nature, and muſt, thereupon, be deemed ſubſervient to the Orders and Commands of his heavenly Fathers: And therefore, as the very Office of a Prophet requires, that he ſhould ſpeak nothing of himſelf, nor deliver his own Mind or Doctrine, nor ſeek his own Glory, but ſpeak all Things in the Name, and do all Things for the Glory of him that ſent him; ſo are we not to wonder, that we find our bleſſed Lord, tho' he had in him *the Fullneſs of the Godhead*, yet, in his prophetical Capacity, ſpeaking and acting, as if he had no Power, but what was given him from above (even as Ambaſſadors, here on Earth, are obliged to purſue their Maſter's Inſtructions) and therefore, profeſſing ſo frequently, that he delivered no Doctrine of his own Invention, nor did any Thing but what he had a Commiſſion to do.

The *Socinians*, indeed allow, that the Commiſſion, wherewith our Saviour was ſent into the World, to do and reveal God's Will, was Reaſon enough to entitle him to the Appellation of the *Son of God*, and that is all that he pretends to, when he vindicates himſelf to the *Jews*, from any higher Imputation. But now it appears, from a due Inſpection of the Context, that *Chriſt* did not intend to ſay, or prove, that he was the Son

of God, as being his Ambaſſador extraordinary, inſtructed and ſo ſent into the Word, but on a far more excellent Account, *viz.* that, before he came into the World, he was with God the Father, and ſo was his true and eſſential Son, as being *God of God*, and partaking of the ſame Nature, as a Son does with his Father. From the 25th to the 30th Verſe incluſively, it is manifeſt that our Lord diſcourſed to the *Jews*, in ſuch a Manner, that they ſtill thought he was aſſerting his Godhead, and therefore *we ſtone thee*, ſay they, *becauſe thou being a Man, makeſt thyſelf God*, viz. by calling God ſo emphatically, and with ſuch Peculiarity, his Father, as that he was ſo to him alone, and ſo, that *he and his Father were one*. But to this *Chriſt* does not anſwer, by denying, either that he was God, or that he had ever challenged to himſelf that Dignity, which (had he been only Man) had been the propereſt Thing he could have ſaid, to take off the Objection of his Blaſphemy; but, inſtead of that, he ſeems rather to argue, that he was ſo the Son of God, as to have the divine Nature in him: "For if Judges "and Magiſtrates, *ſays he*, are called Gods, from "an imperfect Reſemblance, and Participation of "the divine Authority, how much more may I "be called God, who am both by Nature the "Son of God, and, in the moſt excellent Man-"ner, authorized by him?" This, indeed, our Saviour does not ſpeak in expreſs Words, but he not obſcurely ſignifies it, by ſaying, that *his Father had ſanctified him, and ſent him into the World*; for herein he ſtill declares God to be his Father, and that he was firſt ſanctified, and then ſent, which plainly implies, that he was the Son

of

of God, in Heaven, before his Miſſion into the World; and, for a further Proof of his divine Original, he appeals to the divine Operations he performed, *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, tho' you believe not me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

When therefore our bleſſed Saviour ſays of himſelf, that *All Power is given unto him, both in Heaven and Earth*; and that unto his Diſciples *he had appointed a Kingdom, even as his Father had appointed to him*; when St. *Paul* ſtiles him the *righteous Judge*, who *ſhall give a Crown of Righteouſneſs to all that love his Appearance*; and St. *Matthew*, that *King*, who ſhall *ſeparate the Sheep from the Goats*, and *reward every one according to his Works*; it can hardly be thought, that to diſtribute Rewards in the Kingdom of Glory, is a Prerogative peculiar to the Father alone, and ſuch as no way belongs to the Son; becauſe our Saviour, in Reply to *Zebedee*'s Children, tells us, *That to ſit on the right Hand, and on his left, was not his to give, but it ſhall be given to them, for whom it was prepared of his Father*; ſince the whole Deſign of that Paſſage is to ſhew, that thoſe Rewards ſhall not be diſtributed, upon ſuch Conditions, and in ſuch a Manner, as theſe Petitioners vainly imagined. To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that the Words, *ſhall be given to them*, are only a Supplement made by the Tranſlators, for they are not in the Original, which is literally thus, —— *To ſit on my right Hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but*, or *except*, to them alone, *for whom it is prepared of my Father*: And this means no more, than that the Honours and Degrees of Happineſs,

in the other World, are not the Son's to give, in the Senſe that theſe Apoſtles fancied, *i. e.* he does not give them abſolutely and arbitrarily; he is not led by Partiality and Fondneſs, and Reſpect of Perſons; he is not carried by Humour, or vanquiſhed by the Importunity of Friends or Suitors, as earthly Princes are, but is limited by the Conſiderations of Equity and ſtrict Juſtice, from which it can never be conſiſtent with the Perfections of his Nature to depart: For, that the whole Proceſs of the final Judgment, and conſequently the Diſpenſations of future Rewards and Puniſhments, are to be tranſacted by our bleſſed Saviour, we have this expreſs Teſtimony in Scripture, *The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son, that all Men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*

Though we are not much acquainted with the Condition of Angels, or the Ingredients of their Happineſs, yet thus much the Scripture has informed us, concerning them, that *they are miniſtring Spirits, ſent out to miniſter for them, that ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*; and, therefore, we may reaſonably preſume, that they are full of Tenderneſs for their Charge, ſollicitous for their particular Safety, and extreamly glad of any Good that befals them. How theſe heavenly Hoſts were affected with the Salvation of Mankind in general, is evident from the Hymn with which they attended at the Birth of *Chriſt*, to welcome him into the World; and though their Nature be far diſtant from us Mortals, and their Bliſs exquiſite, beyond what we are able to conceive; yet, in regard that both their Nature and their Bliſs are finite, their Joy may certainly admit of an Increaſe;

Increaſe; and as often as a Sinner is converted from the Evil of his Ways, there may ſpring up a freſh Object, and a large and literal Addition to it.

But can this properly be ſaid of God too, whoſe Perfection of Happineſs allows no ſuch Accumulation? No, doubtleſs; and therefore, with reſpect to him, we muſt interpret this, as Reaſon and Religion oblige us to underſtand many ſuch like Paſſages, where human Parts and Paſſions are attributed to him. As therefore the *Holy Ghoſt*, meaning to repreſent his Diſpleaſure, and our Baſeneſs, does it, by ſaying, that *we provoke him to Anger, kindle his Fury, grieve, and weary his Spirit*, and the like; ſo here, by ſaying, that God rejoyceth over a repenting Sinner, is intended, that ſuch Repentance is highly agreeable to him, and that, were his Nature capable of the ſame unequal Motions with ours, the Joy of a Father or a Friend, for retrieving the Perſon he loves beſt, and had been moſt in Pain for, would be but a feeble and a very faint Image of that Satisfaction, which this excites in him, who loves us better than the tendereſt Parent, or moſt affectionate Friend upon Earth does, or can do.

But why ſhould the Degree of Joy be ſo intenſe upon this Occaſion? Why ſhould the Reformation of one Sinner raiſe it above the Safety of many Souls, who never fell from their Integrity? And the ninety-nine Sheep, which never ſtrayed, excite leſs of it, than one poor ſilly Wanderer? In order to reſolve this Difficulty we muſt obſerve, that in the Parables of the Goſpel, it is uſual to repreſent all of the ſame Kind, tho' they be ſometimes the greater Number, by one Man: Thus, in the Parable of the *Marriage Supper*, the Man who

who had not on his wedding Garment, according to the Senſe of moſt Interpreters, repreſents all wicked Men; and, in that of the ſeveral Talents, the ſlothful Servant, who hid his in a Napkin, is ſaid to be one, whereas they, who improved theirs, are three; and yet it can hardly be doubted, but that there are fewer, who receive the Grace of God, to any good Purpoſe, than they who receive it in vain; and, in like Manner, though in the preceding Parables, there is Mention made but of one loſt Piece of Silver, and of one ſtrayed Sheep, yet is that one the Repreſentative of the whole Tribe of Sinners, which do certainly out number the few that are righteous; and therefore, according to this Acceptation, the the Joy in Heaven may be allowed to be greater, becauſe the Objects that give Occaſion to it, are more.

But even, if this were not, as theſe Words were ſpoken of God, after the Manner of Men, ſo are they to be underſtood in a Senſe agreeable to human Paſſions. Now in ourſelves, we perceive, that in obtaining what we paſſionately deſired, in regaining what we looked upon as loſt, and in ſecuring what was in great and eminent Danger, our Joy is ſtrong, and our Delight tranſporting. The Surprize of an Eſcape, which we did not expect, and the regaining of a Treaſure we had given for loſt, is entertained with Rapture, becauſe it is a Kind of new Acceſſion to our Fortunes, and like a Thing we never enjoyed before. A loving Father, no doubt, finds great Comfort in ſeeing all his Children in a perfect State of Health; but if one of them chance to fall ſick, and, beyond Expectation of Recovery, to ſee him out of Danger,

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adminiſters more preſent Joy, than does the conſtant Health of all the reſt; and, in like Manner, though a continued Courſe of Goodneſs, be in itſelf moſt valuable, yet the Recovery of a loſt Sinner, the reviving one dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, the ſeeing him ſnatched as a Firebrand out of the Fire, when he was juſt going to fall into it, gives a more freſh and lively Joy; and therefore *it is meet*, ſays the Father, in the Parable, that, upon this Occaſion, *we ſhould make merry and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again; was loſt, and is found.*

Some Interpreters are of Opinion, that the Parable of the *Lord of the Vineyard*, paying all his Labourers alike, is to be underſtood of the *Gift of Grace*, or firſt Admiſſion to the Privileges of the Goſpel, and not of the Fruition of Glory; becauſe the Wages, here mentioned, are given to the Envious and Unthankful. But allowing this to be no more than a Paſſage inſerted for Ornament and Illuſtration only, or that it may mean a Reward ſo ſurprizingly great, as, among Men, would provoke the Envy of others, yet, if we ſtate the Caſes of the ſeveral Labourers, in the Parable, as it includes the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in general, and private *Chriſtians* in particular, we ſhall find no Injuſtice in what the *Lord of the Vineyard* did unto them.

To the *Jews* God was pleaſed to make the firſt expreſs Diſcoveries of his Will, by a written Law: In Proceſs of Time the like Benefit was extended to the *Gentiles*. They readily accepted it, and, by ſo doing, became Partakers of the ſame Grace and precious Promiſes with thoſe who had long been brought up under the legal, and from that, removed ſooner under the evangelical Diſpenſation.

penſation. The Apoſtles left all and followed *Chriſt.* The primitive Chriſtians gave in their Names to his Doctrine, and continued ſtedfaſt in it, at the certain Peril of their Liberties, their Friendſhips, their Fortunes, nay, their Lives; and yet, in any after Ages of *Chriſtianity*, they who live and die, though quietly and peaceably, in the ſincere Profeſſion of this Religion, are promiſed the Kingdom of Heaven, as a Reward for their Faith and Obedience.

In like Manner, ſome have the Happineſs of a pious Education, and carry on their early Virtue through the ſeveral Stages of Life; others, who either wanted that Advantage, or have neglected to improve it, run into the ſame Exceſs of Riot, with the unthinking Part of the World; and yet, if theſe, though late, ſee their Follies, and effectually forſake them, the Promiſe of God ſtandeth ſure, *that, at what Time ſoever the wicked Man turneth away from the Wickedneſs he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his Soul alive.* This is the whole Senſe of the Parable, and theſe are the common Caſes, to which it is applied; but we miſtake the Meaning of it widely, if we think that it denotes an Equality of Rewards in the Kingdom of Heaven, ſince we have this Aſſurance given us, that as there *is one Glory of the Sun, another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars, ſo is alſo the Reſurrection of the Dead.* Thoſe that are raiſed to everlaſting Life, ſhall indeed be all glorious; but ſtill the Glory of ſome ſhall be greater than that of others. Every good *Chriſtian* ſhall, no doubt, be admitted to a State of Felicity; but when we conſider theſe Words of our Saviour, *I have appointed unto you a Kingdom, that ye may eat*

and

S^t LUKE 15 Verse 14.

the Prodigal Son in his Extremity is sent to feed Swine.

and drink at my Table, in my Kingdom, and ſit on Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael, we cannot but infer, that there are ſome particular Marks and Inſtances of Glory, wherewith the Apoſtles of our Lord will be honoured above other *Chriſtians:* And, in like Manner, though a late Penitent (if he be ſincere) ſhall be received to Mercy at laſt, yet he has not ordinarily any Reaſon to expect a Degree of Glory equal to his, who has never ſwerved from his Duty, or quickly returned to it. His Bliſs ſhall be perfect, indeed, though it be not the moſt exalted; and though he be leſs happy than ſome other *Chriſtians*, yet he ſhall be much Happier than he deſerves.

Though the Difference between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, in Matters of Religion, was great, and no ſmall Obſtruction to all Civil Intercourſe, yet it was not, at all Times, carried to ſuch an Height, as to deny to each other the common Right of Hoſpitality. Our Saviour himſelf, was, once upon a Time, when he met the *Samaritan* Woman at *Jacob*'s Well, kindly received by the People of *Sychar* for the Space of two Days, but then he was returning out of *Judea*, whereas he was now going up to *Jeruſalem*, with a Purpoſe to celebrate the *Feaſt of Tabernacles*. The *Samaritans* had likewiſe a Feaſt of the ſame kind, though not obſerved at the ſame Time, of as old a Date, as the firſt Separation under *Jeroboam*, and inſtituted both in Imitation of, and Oppoſition to the great Feſtival, that our Lord was now going to ſolemnize, and therefore this travelling thro' their Country, with a ſet Purpoſe to do this, was looked upon as an Affront to their Way of Worſhip; for it argued our Lord's Judgment, in this

Caſe to be, that *Jeruſalem* was the only Place where theſe Feaſts could be regularly celebrated; and conſequently, that the keeping them on Mount *Gerizim*, and the Temple there, was a preſumptuous Innovation, directly contrary to the Will and Law of God.

" But why was our Saviour alone treated in " this rude Manner, when every Traveller to " *Jeruſalem*, upon the like Occaſion, declared a- " gainſt the *Samaritan* Schiſm, as much as he " did, and yet, for any Thing we find, met with " better Entertainment?" Now this different Sort of Treatment can be reſolved into nothing, but the different Characters of the Travellers; the *Samaritans* might think, that the Opinions and Practices of common People, was not worth their Regard; but that it would be of mighty Conſequence, if a Perſon, ſo eminent as *Jeſus*, ſhould declare againſt them; and therefore, ſince his going to Worſhip at *Jeruſalem*, on this ſolemn Occaſion, would, in all common Acceptation, bear this Meaning; they contrived to prevent, as much as in them lay, the Influence, which that ſuppoſed Indignity might have, by revenging it with another, of not receiving him; becauſe ſuch Refuſal, they thought, was a conſtructive diſowning of his Authority, and a plain Declaration to all People, that whatever Eſteem and Veneration others might have for this famed Man, they themſelves took him for no Prophet.

In the Feaſt of *Tabernacles*, it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews* (derived, as ſome imagine, from the Inſtitution of their Prophets *Haggai* and *Zechariah*) on the laſt Day more eſpecially, to fetch Water from the Fountain of *Siloah*, in great Pomp and

and Solemnity, with Trumpets and other muſical Inſtruments going before them. At ſuch Fountains it was uſual to build Receptacles or Wells, and, in the Middle of them, to have Pipes and Ciſterns laid, through which the Water paſſed, and coming out at Cocks, was received in Urns, or large big-bellied Veſſels, and ſo carried to the Temple. The Water thus carried was given to the Prieſts, who mixing it with the Wine of the Sacrifices, offered it to God, by way of Interceſſion for the Bleſſing of Rain, againſt the approaching Seed-time: And during the whole Feſtival they read the Ivth Chapter of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, which begins with theſe Words, *Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money*, &c.

Now, whoever looks into the Method of our Saviour's Preaching, may eaſily perceive, that it was cuſtomary with him to take Occaſion, from ſome obvious Thing or other, to diſcourſe of ſpiritual Bleſſings, and frequently to make uſe of Phraſes metaphorically taken from the Matter in Hand. Purſuant hereunto, we find him, in Alluſion to the Cuſtoms of this Feaſt, beginning his Invitation with Words, not unlike what we have cited from the Prophet, *If any Man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink*. Water is, by God himſelf, repreſented as no bad Emblem of the Diſpenſation of Grace; for *I will pour Water*, ſays he, *upon him that is thirſty, and Floods upon the dry Ground*. Which he explains in this Manner, *I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and Bleſſing upon thine Offspring*; and by the frequent Libations, in the *Feaſt of Tabernacles*, were ſuppoſed, by the *Jewiſh* Doctors themſelves, to have had

a myſtical Senſe in them: And therefore the Meaning of our Saviour's Words is this, —— That whoever were deſirous of the ſpiritual Bleſſings, which were prefigured in the feſtival Rites, if they would become his Diſciples, and believe in him, as the promiſed *Meſſiah*, he would communicate to them ſuch Gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and in ſuch a plentiful Meaſure, as the World was not yet acquainted with, *for out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water.*

Whence it is, that our Saviour borrowed this metaphorical Expreſſion, is a Matter not ſo well agreed by the Learned. Some think, from the *Proverbs of Solomon*, —— *The Words of a Man's Mouth are as deep Waters, and the Well-ſpring of Wiſdom a flowing Brook.* Others, from the xxxiid. Chapter of *Iſaiah*, *Behold a King ſhall Reign in Righteouſneſs, and Princes ſhall rule in Judgment, and a Man ſhall be as Rivers of Waters in a dry Place*: And others (with more Probability) from the lviiith of that Prophet; *Thou ſhalt be like a watered Garden, and like a Spring of Water, whoſe Waters fail not.* However this be, it is certain that our Saviour, taking the Riſe of his Diſcourſe from the cuſtomary Libations at this Time, had under his View and Conſideration the Make and Figure of the Water-Veſſels that were uſed on this Occaſion, which, by Reaſon of their large Bellies, being able to hold a great Quantity of Water, were therefore proper Emblems of that plentiful Effuſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, which he intended to ſend upon the *Chriſtian* Church, 1 *Cor.* xii. 1, *&c.*

DISSER-

DISSERTATION II.

Of our bleſſed Saviour's *Miracles, and their Excellency. What a real Miracle is. Miracles, a ſufficient Teſtimony of a divine Miſſion. That the* Meſſiah *was to work Miracles: And our Saviour aſſuming that Character. The Nature of his Miracles. Which were ſuitable to the Character he aſſumed; and therefore a Proof of his divine Miſſion, becauſe they had all the Marks of true Miracles; were performed without Aſſiſtance; and beyond the Competition of any other Prophet's, eſpecially in the Number of them.*

THAT the Accompliſhment of antient Prophecies, in the Perſon and Actions of our bleſſed Saviour, was one of the external Evidences of his divine Miſſion, and conſequently of the Truth of our moſt holy Religion, was the Subject of our laſt Deſertation; and how far the Evidence of the Miracles, which he wrought, is available to the ſame great End, we ſhall now endeavour to ſet before our Reader.

To this Purpoſe we muſt obſerve, that a true Miracle is properly ſuch an Operation as exceeds the ordinary Courſe of Things, and is repugnant to the known Laws of Nature, as to its ſubject Matter.

Matter, or the Manner of its Performance. For though we readily acknowledge, that there are Beings in the ſpiritual World, which are able to perform Things far exceeding the Power of Men, and therefore apt to beget Wonder and Amazement in us; yet, that any created Beings, and conſequently Agents of a limited Power, are capable of working ſuch Miracles as our Saviour did; are capable of controuling the Courſe of Nature, of ſupplying Men's natural Defects, of giving Sight to the Blind, Speech to the Dumb, and Life to the Dead, (which are Miracles relating to the Subject-Matter) or of doing any of theſe Things, in an Inſtant, by a Touch, by a Word, at a Diſtance, and without any kind of outward Means, (which are Miracles regarding the Manner of their Performance) is a Thing impoſſible; unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that limited, inferior and created Beings have an equal Power of creating, controuling and reſtoring with Almighty God, which is Contradiction enough in all Conſcience.

It was upon this Perſuaſion, therefore, *viz.* that *true Miracles are the ſole Operation of God*; that the World has, all along, agreed to acknowledge and accept of Miracles, as an authentick and indiſputable Teſtimony, that the Perſons entruſted with ſuch Power, were certainly ſent and commiſſioned by God. To this Purpoſe we find *Pharaoh*'s Magicians confeſſing, that the Miracles which *Moſes* and *Aaron* exhibited, were the *Finger of God*; and, in the Controverſy between *Elijah* and the Prieſts of *Baal*, it was readily accepted as a fair Propoſal, that he, *who anſwered by Fire from Heaven*, ſhould be unanimouſly ſerved and worſhipped as God. The leſs Reaſon have we then

to

to wonder, that we hear a learned Ruler of the *Jews* accoſting our Lord in theſe Words, *Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher ſent from God, for no Man can do thoſe Miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him*; or that a mean Man, who had been born blind, ſhould confound the whole Aſſembly of the *Phariſees*, with this one Argument, *Since the World began, was it not heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of the Blind; if this Man were not of God, he could do nothing*; or that our bleſſed Saviour himſelf ſhould ſo frequently appeal to the Miracles he wrought, as proper Teſtimonies of his divine Miſſion, *The Works which my Father hath ſent me to finiſh; the Works which I do in my Father's Name, the ſame bear Witneſs of me, that my Father ſent me.*

Our Saviour, indeed, and his Apoſtles both, do often appeal to the Predictions of the Prophets, relating to the promiſed *Meſſiah*, as fulfilled and accompliſhed in him; and the Truth is, unleſs the Validity of this Appeal can be ſupported, Miracles alone, or excluſive of this Teſtimony, would not be a ſufficient Evidence of our Lord's Miſſion: But then, it ought to be conſidered, that when, among the particular Predictions of a Perſon promiſed to the *Jews*, as their *Meſſiah*, it was foretold, that he ſhould *be like unto* Moſes; that *the Spirit of the Lord ſhould reſt upon him*; that *he ſhould open the Eyes of the Blind, and unſtop the Ears of the Deaf*; and that he *ſhould make the Lame to leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb to ſing*. Miracles became then a eſſential Part of his Character, and ſure Teſt of his being a Prophet ſent from God.

Some

Some modern *Jews*, indeed, when preſſed with the Evidence of our Saviour's Miracles, makes this their Subterfuge, — That the *Meſſiah*, at his Coming, was not to *perform any Wonders of this kind, but only to manage the Lord's Battles, and to overcome the People that were round about him.* But that this was not the Senſe of the *Jewiſh* Nation is evident from the Words of that People in our Saviour's Time; *When* Chriſt *cometh, will he do more Miracles than theſe, which this Man hath done?* Nay, an Author of theirs, of no great Antiquity (after his having mentioned the three glorious Gifts, *viz.* Prophecy, Miracles, and the Knowledge of God, which the *Iſraelites*, in the Time of their Captivity, had loſt) gives us to underſtand, that upon the Appearance of the *Meſſiah*, the Return of Miracles was juſtly to be expected, in Completion of this Prophecy, *I will pour out my Spirit upon all Fleſh, and your Sons and your Daughters ſhall propheſy, your old Men ſhall dream Dreams, and your young Men ſhall ſee Viſions.*

Since the *Meſſiah* then was to work Miracles, when he came into the World, if we conſider the Deſign of our bleſſed Saviour's Miſſion, *viz.* that he was a *Teacher ſent from God* to aboliſh a Form of Worſhip, which had inconteſtibly been eſtabliſhed by the Power of Miracles in *Moſes*, and to introduce a new Religion, repugnant to the Wiſdom of the World, in many myſterious Doctrines, and abhorrent to the vicious Inclinations of Men, in all its righteous Laws and Precepts; that he was appointed, in ſhort, to deſtroy the Kingdom of the Devil, and, upon its Ruins, to erect a Kingdom of Righteouſneſs, there was an abſolute

abſolute Neceſſity for him to be inveſted with a Power of working Miracles, otherwiſe his Pretenſions to this high Character had been ridiculous, and the *Jews*, with good Reaſon, might have demanded of him, *Maſter, we ſeek a Sign from thee, what Sign therefore doſt thou do, that we may ſee and believe?* But this Demand is effectually ſilenced by our Saviour's being able to make the Reply, *If I had not done among you the Works which none other Man did, ye had not had Sin; but now ye have both ſeen, and hated both me and my Father.*

John the Baptiſt, who was born a little before our Saviour, was his *Fore-runner*. He appeared at the Time when the *Meſſiah* was expected; and being much famed for his Virtue and Sanctity of Life, was followed by the People, who were prone to take him for the Prophet who was to come, as there was not, indeed, at that Time, a greater *Perſon born among Women*; and yet, the divine Providence ſo ordered the Matter, that, as great as he was, he wanted this Character of the true *Meſſiah, viz.* the working of Miracles; and therefore our Saviour, comparing himſelf with the *Baptiſt*, a burning and a ſhining Light, indeed, but who himſelf did no Miracles, *I have a greater Witneſs*, ſays he, *than that of* John, *for the Works which my Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame Works that I do, bear Witneſs of me, that I am the* Meſſiah, *or* (which is all one) *that my Father hath ſent me.*

And well, indeed, might our Lord be allowed to claim a Pre-eminence, not above the *Baptiſt* only, but above every Prophet that went before him; when, upon ſo many Occaſions, he exerciſed a Power and Authority, not inferior to that of God;

when, by the ſame Omnipotence wherewith he created all Things at firſt, he multiplied a few Loaves, and two Fiſhes, into a ſufficiency to feed five thouſand; when, at his Command, the Wind and the Sea grew ſtill, and unclean Spirits departed from Men's Bodies, confeſſing him to be the Son of God; when acute Diſeaſes, and chronical Griefs, ſuch as no length of Time, no Skill, no Remedies, no Expence could aſſuage, were equally cured with a Touch of his Garment, or with a Word; nay, with a Word that operated effectually upon the abſent, and at a Diſtance; when Perſons at Death's Door, nay, actually dead, and dead for ſome Time, were commanded back to Life and Health; and himſelf, when ſlain by the *Jews*, and committed to the Grave, was, according to his own Prediction, raiſed from the Dead, by the ſame divine Spirit, whereby *He quickeneth and enliveneth all Things.*

Theſe, and many more Actions of the like Nature, recorded in the Goſpel, are plain Demonſtrations of a divine Power reſiding in our bleſſed Saviour; but then there is ſomething farther to be ſaid, concerning theſe miraculous Acts of his, *viz.* that they were exceedingly well choſen to characterize the *Meſſiah*, in regard of their Suitableneſs to the End and Deſign of his Coming.

The Law was enacted with a very terrible Pomp, ſuch as ſpoke it to be (what indeed it was) a Diſpenſation of Servitude and great Severity. But the Goſpel is a Covenant of Reconciliation and Peace, of Friendſhip, nay, of Sonſhip with God, intended, not ſo much to ſtrike Awe upon Men's Minds, as to charm and win them over by all the endearing Methods of Gentleneſs and Love; and

therefore the Wonders, that bore Teſtimony to its Truth, were Works of Mercy and Kindneſs, ſuch as never wrought any Harm, but always brought Comfort and Advantage to the Diſtreſſed. Suſtenance to the Hungry, Supplies to thoſe in Want, Safety to them that were ready to periſh, Speech to the Dumb, Hearing to the Deaf, Eyes to the Blind, Underſtanding to the Directed, Strength to the Impotent, Limbs to the Maimed, Health to the Sick, Life to the Dead, and Releaſe to Souls and Bodies held in Bondage by the Devil; theſe, theſe are the Wonders by which our *Jeſus* proved his Miſſion, Wonders of Gentleneſs and Piety, of Beneficence and Love, wherein he manifeſtly excels, and, as it were, triumphs over all the Prophets that went before him. They proved their Commiſſion by Acts of divine Vengeance, and ſore Plagues, as well as by Cures, and corporal Deliverances; whereas our bleſſed Lord went about always doing Good; healing Diſeaſes and Infirmities, but inflicting none; and releaſing from Death, but never haſtening it; inſomuch that through the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, we have not one Inſtance of his Power exerted in the Suffering and Annoyance even of his bittereſt Enemies.

When *John the Baptiſt* had heard of the Works which *Chriſt* did, he ſent two of his Diſciples with this Meſſage to him, *Art thou he that ſhould come* (*i. e.* the promiſed *Meſſiah*) *or look we for another?* To whom our Lord returned this Anſwer, *Go, and ſhew* John *again theſe Things, which ye do hear and See, the Blind receive their Sight, and the Lame walk; the Lepers are cleanſed, and the Deaf hear, and the Dead are raiſed up.* The An-

wer is, in a great Meaſure, taken from the Prophet *Iſaiah*, deſcribing the great Operations of the *Meſſiah*; and, by remiting the *Baptiſt* to them, our Saviour intended to ſhew, that he muſt of Neceſſity be the Perſon he ſent to enquire after, becauſe he had not only the Power of doing Miracles, but even of doing the ſelf ſame Miracles that the evangelical Prophet had predicted of the *Meſſiah*.

Now, of all the great Attributes of God, there is none that ſhine brighter and more amiable in our Eyes, than Truth and Goodneſs: The former cannot atteſt a Lye, nor the latter ſeduce Men into dangerous and deſtructive Miſtakes. And yet, if God ſhould communicate any Part of his Power to an Impoſtor, to enable him to work Miracles, and ſuch Miracles in kind, as were foretold of the true *Meſſiah*, in confirmation of his Pretences, what would become of theſe two ſacred Attributes! To ſuſpect, I ſay, that Almighty God is capable of employing his infinite Power, with a Deſign to miſlead and delude Mankind, in what relates to their eternal Concerns, is to deſtroy and ſubvert his very nature, and to leave ourſelves no Notion at all of ſuch a Being. Nay, for him to permit the ſame Evidences to be produced for Errors, as for Truth, is, in effect, to cancel his own Credentials, and to make Miracles of no Significance at all. And therefore, how artfully ſoever ſome Impoſtors may contrive their Deluſions, yet we are not to doubt, but that, if we examine, 1ſt, the Works themſelves, and their Manner of being done, and 2dly, The Perſons themſelves, and the Ends for which they do them, we ſhall be able to diſcern the Difference between real Miracles and lying Wonders.

First then, In relation to the Works themſelves, it is required, that they be poſſible, ſince no Power whatever can effect that which is ſtrictly impoſſible; that they be probable, ſince the Divine Power will hardly concern itſelf in what ſavours of Fable and Romance; that they be not below the Majeſty of God, as he is the Ruler and Governor of the World, nor inconſiſtent with his Character, as he is a good and gracious Being; that they be done openly, before a ſufficient Number of Witneſſes; readily, without any previous Forms or Ceremonies, which may make them look like Incantation; and upon all proper and important Occaſions, to denote the Permanency of that divine Power, by which they are effected.

Secondly, In relation to the Perſon pretending to a divine Miſſion, it is required that he be a Man of good Report, for his unblamable Converſation; that he be in the perfect Exerciſe of his Reaſon and Senſes, and conſtant and uniform in the Meſſage he delivers; that the Doctrine, which he endeavours to eſtabliſh by his Miracles, be conſiſtent with the Principles of true Reaſon, and natural Religion; conſiſtent with the right Notions and Worſhip of God; and conſiſtent with the former Revelations he hath made of his Will; of a Tendency to deſtroy the *Devil*'s Power in the World; to recover Men from their Ignorance; to reform them from their Vices; to lead them into the Practice of Virtue and true Godlineſs, by proper Motives and Arguments, and, in ſhort, to advance the general Welfare of Societies, as well as every Man's particular Happineſs in this Life, and in his Preparation for a better. And now to obſerve

obſerve how all theſe Characters meet in the bleſſed *Jeſus.*

That *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* was a Perſon of great Virtue and Goodneſs, in full Poſſeſſion of his Reaſon and Senſes, and conſtant and uniform in the Meſſage he delivered to Mankind, not only the whole Tenour of his Conduct, as it is recorded by the *Evangeliſts*; but the Nature of his Doctrine, and Excellency of his Precepts, the Manner of his Diſcourſes to the People, and the Wiſdom of his Replies to the inſidious Queſtions of his Adverſaries, are a plain Demonſtration: And that *this* Jeſus *was a Man approved of God, by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the Midſt of all the People,* is manifeſt, not only from the Teſtimony of his Friends and Diſciples, but from the Confeſſion of *Heathen Hiſtorians*, as well as the Traditions of the *Jewiſh Talmud*, wherein the Memory of them is preſerved.

Theſe Miracles, indeed, were above the Skill of Men or Angels to effect; but they were not therefore impoſſible, becauſe ſubject to the Power of Almighty God; for the ſame Agent who formed the Eye, could reſtore the Blind to Sight; he, who wrought the whole Frame of our Bodies, could as eaſily cure the Maimed, or heal the Diſeaſed; and he, who cauſes the Rain to deſcend, and to water the Earth, *that it may miniſter Bread to the Eater, and Seed to the Sower*, could be at no Loſs to change Water into Wine, or to multiply the Loaves and Fiſhes for the Relief of the Hungry.

Theſe Miracles again, being Acts of Mercy, as well as Power, were not conſiſtent with the Character of an Impoſtor, or the Agency of any wicked

wicked Spirit; but that God ſhould have Compaſſion on his Creatures, and exerciſe his tender Mercies over the Works of his own Hands; that he ſhould give Bread to the Hungry, and Limbs to the Maimed, and Releaſe to ſuch as were under the Captivity of *Satan*, is no improbable Thing at all. Theſe were Actions ſuitable to his Majeſty, and highly comporting with his Wiſdom and Goodneſs; ſince they naturally tended, both to beget Reverence in the Minds of Men towards his Meſſenger, and to reconcile them to the Belief and Obedience of his heavenly Will.

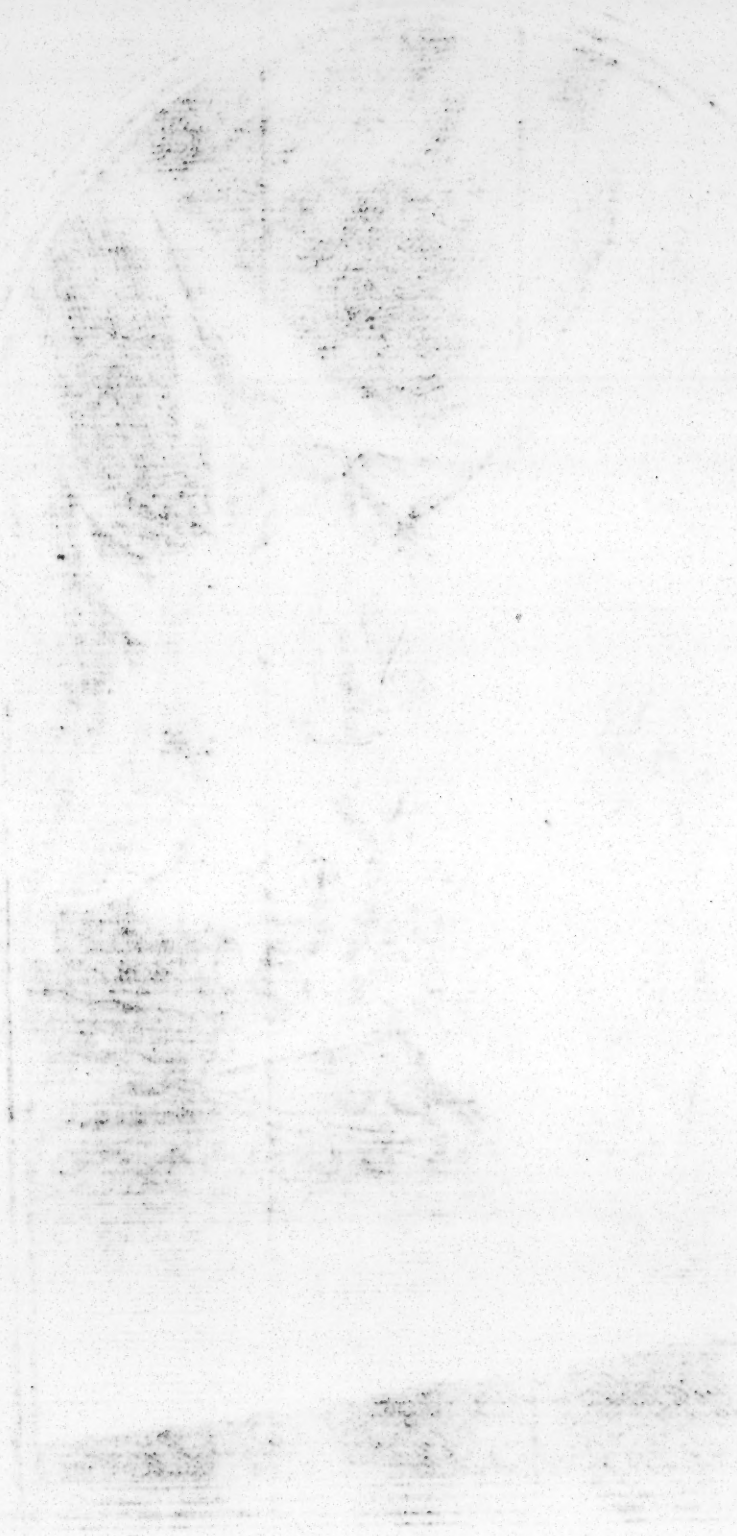
Now theſe Miracles our Saviour did openly in the Temple, in the Synagogues, and on the Feſtivals, when the Concourſe of People was greateſt, when the Doctors of the Law, who came on purpoſe to enſnare him, were ſitting by, and *beholding what was done.* Theſe he did readily, and with a Word's ſpeaking: For *Peace, be ſtill,* quelled the raging of the Winds and Waves; *Young Man ariſe,* revived the Widow's Son; *Ephphatha, be opened,* gave the deaf Man hearing; and *Lazarus, come forth,* raiſed him from the Grave, who had been four Days dead. Theſe he did frequently, and upon all proper Occaſions; for from the Time that he entered upon his Miniſtry, ſcarce a Day paſſed, without ſome freſh Inſtance of his Power and Goodneſs; inſomuch, that if all his Actions of this kind, had been particularly recorded, *the World itſelf* (as St. *John,* by an elegant *Hyperbole,* declares) *would not contain the Books, which ſhould be written:* And (what crowns all) theſe he did with a Deſign to eſtabliſh a Religion, whoſe Buſineſs it is, to give Men the moſt exalted Thoughts of God and his Providence, and the greateſt Certainty

tainty of future Rewards and Puniſhments; to oblige them, by the ſtrongeſt Motives, to obſerve and practice whatſoever Things are true, and honeſt, and juſt, and pure, and lovely, and of good Report; to perſuade them to mortify every inordinate Affection, and to attain thoſe excellent Diſpoſitions of Mind, which will make them reſemble God, and beſt prepare them for future Happineſs: In a Word, to eſtabliſh the Practice of the two great Virtues, *the Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*, upon theſe two excellent Principles, *of Faith in God*, as the Rewarder of thoſe that ſeek him, and *Faith in* Jeſus Chriſt, as the Saviour and Judge of Mankind.

And, if ſuch be the End and Deſign of the *Chriſtian* Religion, there is little Reaſon to ſuppoſe (as the *Jews* are very willing to object) that the *Devil* could have any Hand in aſſiſting our Saviour to effect ſuch Miracles, as gave Credit to the firſt Appearance and Strength, and Succeſs to the Propagation of thoſe Doctrines which were calculated on purpoſe to deſtroy his Dominion in the World, and, upon its Ruins to erect the Kingdom of God, and his *Chriſt*. The *Devil* is not ſo ſilly a Being, as to join Forces with his avowed Enemy, in order to ruin and depoſe himſelf: And, if our Saviour could hope for no Aſſiſtance from that Quarter, the Pretence of his doing his Miracles, by Virtue of the Name *Jehovah*, ſtolen out of the *Sanctuary*, and uſed as a Charm, is a Fiction too groſs and palpable, to ſtand in need of any Confutation.

Philoſtratus, indeed, in his Hiſtory of the Life of *Appollonius*, ſets him up for a great Worker of Miracles; and ſome, of late Times, have been bold

St. Paul's Vision of a Man of Macedonia praying him to come thither. Acts 16. 9.



bold enough to name him in Competition with our bleſſed Saviour. But, beſides, that Hiſtory of *Apollonius* has no other Voucher than his Servant *Damis*, (who was confeſſedly a weak and ignorant Perſon, and conſequently very capable of being impoſed upon by the artful Juggles of his Maſter) the very Miracles, related therein, are, for the moſt part ridiculous, unworthy the Character of a Prophet, and (as the learned *Photius* ſays) *full of Follies and monſtrous Tales.* Nay, in the higheſt Inſtances of his miraculous Power, *viz.* his raiſing a dead Woman to Life again: *Philoſtratus* himſelf ſuſpects (as he ſays the Company did) that there was ſome Colluſion in the Matter; but, if even it were not ſo, the Doctrines which *Apollonius* taught, and the Zeal he profeſſed for the *Pagan* Idolatry, together with his exceſſive Pride, Ambition, and vain Affectation of divine Honours, are a plain Indication, that his Miracles were falſe, and his moſt ſurprizing Performances, either the Effects of Magick, or down right Cheat and Impoſture.

Tacitus, indeed, tells us of two Cures, one of a blind, and the other of a lame Perſon, which *Veſpaſian* pretended to work at *Alexandria*; but whoever reflects on the Situation of his Affairs, at that Time, will perceive ſome Reaſon to ſuſpect a Colluſion. He was now in a Diſpute with himſelf what to do, whether to aſſume the *Roman* Empire, or reſtore the antient Form of Government, a *Commonwealth*. The Reſtoration of the latter was what *Dion* and *Euphrates*, two eminent Philoſophers, adviſed; but *Apollonius* (whom he likewiſe conſulted upon this Occaſion) with great Vehemence perſuaded the contrary, and (being himſelf accuſtomed to ſuch Artifices) might, not improbably,

probably, ſuggeſt to *Veſpaſian*, the Neceſſity of ſome Miracle or other, in order to recommend him to the People, as a Perſon highly favoured by the Gods.

And, indeed, if we conſider what an obſcure Perſon, and of what mean Original *Veſpaſian* was, there ſeems to be the greater Reaſon, why *Apollonius*, and others of that Party, ſhould think of ſome Expedient or other, to raiſe him a Reputation in the World, anſwerable to the new Station of Life they had adviſed him to accept: And, whoever conſiders farther, what various Artifices were, at that Time, made uſe of to procure an Opinion of Divinity in the Emperors, will not much Wonder, that ſuch Reports ſhould be ſpread of them, or that certain Perſons ſhould be ſuborned to feign ſuch Diſtempers, and then to give it out, that the Touch of the Emperor's Hand had cured them; tho' it muſt be confeſſed, ſome are of Opinion, that what is reported by *Veſpaſian*, to this Purpoſe, cannot fairly be denied, and might, perhaps, be providentially intended, to give ſome Dignity and ſuperior Character to a Perſon, who (in Conjunction with his Son *Titus*) was appointed by God to be a ſignal Inſtrument of the divine Vengeance on the *Jewiſh* Nation.

Allowing then, that God, for wiſe Ends of his Providence, might now and then permit ſome eminent Perſon to do a real Miracle; yet what is this to that vaſt Number, and great Variety, recorded of our Saviour, who in the ſmall Space of his Miniſtry, did more wonderful Works of this Kind, than what *Moſes*, and all the Prophets put together, from the earlieſt Account of Time, that we read of, are known to have done?

The

The *Jews*, indeed, to ſwell the Account of *Moſes*'s Miracles, reckon each of thoſe that he did in *Egypt*, double; one as a Miracle of Juſtice, in puniſhing *Pharaoh* and his People, and another as a Miracle of Mercy, in preſerving the *Iſraelites* from the like Deſtruction. But, after all their Pains and Contrivance, the Sum amounts to very little, in Compariſon to the many that are recorded of our bleſſed Saviour. The Miracles of all the Prophets put together, by the *Jews* own Computation, do not equal thoſe of *Moſes*; and yet we muſt remember, that *Moſes* lived an hundred and twenty Years, forty of which were one continued Scene of Action; and that the Compaſs of the Prophets, from the Creation of the World, to the Deſtruction of the ſecond Temple, includes three Thouſand and ſome hundreds. Lay this together, and it evidently follows, that ſuch extraordinary Demonſtrations of the divine Preſence and Power, were very thin and ſparingly exhibited, when ſet againſt the innumerable Inſtances of them, in the three, or (at moſt) four Years preaching of the bleſſed *Jeſus*. And if the Wonders related by the *Evangeliſts*, as done by himſelf, in ſo ſhort a Time, do far exceed what both *Moſes* and all the Prophets did, what ſhall we ſay to thoſe many more, that are not related? What to the infinitely more ſtill, that were done by the Apoſtles and Diſciples, in Confirmation of the Doctrine he had taught?

To Sum up what hath been ſaid on this Subject. Since a real Miracle is ſuch an Operation, as can be done by none but God, or ſuch as are appointed by him, and was therefore, in all Ages, acknowledged as an authentick Proof of a divine

Miſſion; ſince the Prophets, in their Predictions of the *Meſſiah*, repreſent him, as working Miracles of a kind and merciful Nature; and our *Saviour*, when he entered upon his Miniſtry, and aſſumed that Character, diſplay'd a wonderful Power in Works of the ſame Kind; ſince that Power could proceed from no other Cauſe, but a Communication from God, and yet to imagine that God would communicate any Part of his Power to give Sanction to an Impoſtor, is a Thing repugnant to his ſacred Attributes; ſince, upon Examination, it appears, that all the Marks and Characters of true Miracles concur in the Works of *Jeſus*, but violent Suſpicions of Trick and Artifice in thoſe that are named in Competition with him; beſides theſe Characters of their Truth, the Number of thoſe which he did (beſides thoſe that were done by Perſons, acting in his Name, and by his Authority) was greater than what all the true Workers of Miracles, *viz.* *Moſes* and the Prophets had done, through the whole Compaſs of the *Old Teſtament*: Since theſe Things appear to be ſuch, I ſay, we are under a Neceſſity to conclude, that our bleſſed Saviour muſt have been the true *Meſſiah* promiſed to the *Jews*, and characterized in the Writings of their Prophets; that he was the great *Meſſenger of the Covenant*, ſent from God, for *if he had not been of God, he could have done nothing*; and, conſequently, that the Meſſage which he delivered to us, containing this Covenant, or, what is all one, that the Religion which he hath ſettled in the World, and confirmed by ſo many inconteſtable Proofs (ſo far as the Teſtimony of Miracles is available) cannot but be true.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

From our LORD's *laſt Entry into* Jeruſalem, *to his Aſcenſion into Heaven; containing the Term of ſix Weeks and five Days.*

UPON our Lord's Entry into *Jeruſalem*, with ſuch a vaſt Retinue of People, the Citizens were alarmed, and began to enquire, who this great Perſon was? To which the Multitude, that accompanied him, anſwered aloud, that it was *Jeſus*, the Prophet of *Nazareth*, a Town in *Galilee*. Having therefore permitted his Kingdom and divine Authority to be thus proclaimed by others, he proceeded, in the next Place, to exert himſelf: For going to the Temple, and there looking about him, he found the *Court of the Gentiles* notoriouſly profaned and diſhonoured by Trading and Merchandize. That therefore he might end, as he had begun his Miniſtry with the Reformation of his Father's Houſe, he drove out all the Buyers and Sellers (as he did three Years before) from the ſacred Ground; he overthrew the Tables of the Money-changers, and the Stall of thoſe that ſold Doves; telling them, that they

they had made the Temple, which was deſervedly called an *Houſe of Prayer*, a *Den of Thieves*. And to let the People ſee, that he had both Commiſſion and Authority to act as he did, he cured, in that Inſtant, many blind and lame Perſons that were brought to him into the Temple.

The People, indeed, were filled with Admiration at the Sight of theſe Things; but the *chief Prieſts* and *Scribes*, when they ſaw the Miracles which he wrought, and heard the Acclamations of the Children, who cried out in the Temple *Hoſanna to the Son of* David! were greatly enraged, and diſcovered their Anger, by asking him, *If he heard what they ſaid?* But he ſilenced their Queſtion, by ſhewing them, that what was ſo diſpleaſing to them, did really fulfil the Scriptures, particularly that Paſſage in the *Pſalmiſt*, where it is ſaid, that *out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings thou haſt perfected Praiſe*. This Anſwer, however, did but enrage them the more, and put them upon ſeeking all Occaſions to deſtroy him; tho' their Dread of the People, who heard him with the gaeateſt Eagerneſs and Attention, was ſome Check upon their Malice.

The *Jews* were not the only Perſons who came up to *Jeruſalem* at the Paſſover; for many devout *Greeks* uſed likewiſe to reſort thither, at that Feaſt; and ſome of theſe being deſirous to have a Sight of *Chriſt*, addreſſed themſelves to *Philip*, one of the Apoſtles, and he, by the Aſſiſtance of *Andrew*, had them introduced. Our Lord was, at that Time, diſcourſing to the Diſciples of many Things relating to his Paſſion, and particularly of the Efficacy of his Death, and what a powerful Means it would prove to convert the World

to

to his Religion; more powerful, indeed, than his Life could poſſibly be, even as Corn, tho' it dies in the Ground, when ſown, riſes again with a vaſt Abundance and Increaſe. While he was thus diſcourſing of his Death, he ſeemed on a Sudden to be ſeized with a natural Horror at his approaching Hour, and was going to requeſt of God a Reprieve from it; but then recollecting, that for this Purpoſe it was, that he came into the World, he changed his Petition, and with a reſolved Acquieſcence in his good Pleaſure, deſired of him, in what Method he ſhould think moſt proper, to glorify his Name; whereupon he was anſwered, by a Voice from Heaven, (which ſome of the Company took for a Clap of Thunder, and others for a Angel's Speaking to him) *that he had glorified it, and would glorify it again.*

This Voice, he told them, was not ſo much for his Information in the Will of Heaven, as it was for their Conviction of his divine *Miſſion*; and ſo he went on diſcourſing to them of his Death, and the beneficial Effects of it, until ſome of them perceiving, in what he ſaid, an Inconſiſtency (as they thought) with ſome Paſſages of Scripture, told him, that they could not rightly comprehend what he meant by Death, ſince ſome Propheſies had aſſured them, that the Meſſiah was to *live for ever.* But to this Objection he made no other Reply, than that it well behoved them to make good uſe of his Inſtructions, for the ſhort Time they were to have them; and ſo he withdrew from them, as well perceiving that neither his divine Diſcourſes, nor miraculous Cures could gain the Faith of any, except the Populace; for tho' ſome of their Rulers did believe in him, yet ſuch

was

was their Timidity, that they durſt not declare it openly, for fear of *Excommunication*, and becauſe *they loved the Praiſe of Men, more than the Praiſe of God.*

Towards the Evening, however, he returned again to the Temple, and exhorted the People to believe in him, as a Meſſenger ſent from God to offer Salvation to Mankind; and, in caſe that they perſiſted in their Infidelity, he threatened them with divine Vengeance in the laſt Day, when the very Goſpel, which he then preached to them, would riſe up in Judgment againſt them, and condemn them; and with theſe Words he left the Temple, and taking his Apoſtles with him, returned to *Bethany*, where he lodged that Night.

The next Morning, as he returned to *Jeruſalem*, finding himſelf a little hungry, he went to a Fig-tree, that was in the Way, in hopes of finding ſome Fruit upon it: But, when he found none, to ſignify his Almighty Power, he curſed the Tree; and ſo proceeding to the Temple, began again to clear it of all the Traders that were got again into it, and there continued all the Day long, teaching and inſtructing the People. While he was doing this, the *chief Prieſts*, *Scribes* and *Rulers* of the People, knowing that he had no Commiſſion from the *Sanhedrim*, came and demanded of him, by what Authority he proceeded in that Manner; but, inſtead of anſwering their Queſtion directly, he put another to them, *viz.* Whether the Baptiſm of *John* was of divine, or only of human Inſtitution? To ſay that it was of divine Inſtitution, would be to accuſe themſelves of Impiety, and Incredulity; and to ſay that it was purely human, would be to provoke the

the People (who all looked upon him as a Prophet) to ſtone them; and therefore, in this *Dilemma*, they concluded, that Ignorance would be the beſt Anſwer, and thereupon declared, that they could not tell; to which our Saviour rejoined, "Neither "is it neceſſary for me to give you an Account "of my Commiſſion and Authority, ſince you ſeem "to grant, that a Man may lawfully preach and "baptize, and entertain Diſciples, as *John* did, "without the Appointment and Permiſſion of the "*Sanhedrim.*" And ſo he proceeded, in ſeveral Parables (ſuch as the Parable of the *two Sons*, that of the *wicked Husbandmen*, and that of the *Gueſts* invited to the *Marriage-feaſt*) to upbraid them with their Hypocriſy, Cruelty, and Contempt of Religion, and for theſe to denounce the ſevere Judgments of God againſt them.

Now let us explain what we have thus far advanced.

The Money-changers, whoſe Tables our Saviour overthrew, were not unlike our Merchants or Bankers, who deal in Bills of Exchange, and either remit Money to foreign Places, or anſwer ſuch Draughts, as, by their Correſpondents abroad, are made upon them: And conſidering that the *Jews* (how far ſoever they lived from it) were obliged to repair to *Jeruſalem*, there to offer their Sacrifices, and pay their half Shekel, for the Uſe of the Temple, *Exod.* xxx. 13. the Inſtitution of ſuch Dealers in Money was highly neceſſary, that the *Jews*, in their ſeveral Diſperſions, who were to come up to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, paying their Money to Merchants at home, might have it, to anſwer their Occaſions, ſafe from Thieves, and from the Trouble of Carriage, when they arrived

at *Jeruſalem*. Whether therefore the Buſineſs of theſe Money-changers was only to return Money from diſtant Parts, or to change foreign Money into current Coin, or larger Money into leſs Pieces, or perhaps to do all this, there was certainly nothing blame-worthy in the Profeſſion, had it not been for ſome intervening Abuſe. In like Manner, it may be ſaid of thoſe, who bought or ſold Cattle for Sacrifices; ſince it would have been highly inconvenient for every Worſhipper, who lived at a conſiderable Diſtance, to bring them up with him, ſuch Men were neceſſary in their Way, as were likewiſe the Sellers of Doves, becauſe every *Iſraelite* did not keep this Kind of Birds, and yet no one Creature was ſo often required in Sacrifice, as they. Our Saviour therefore, in this Tranſaction, muſt not be thought to blame all ſuch Traffick in general, but only to find fault with the People, for having taken up an improper Place for the Exerciſe of their reſpective Callings: And therefore, to let them know, that it was not out of Paſſion, or any peeviſh Reſentment againſt them, but purely in Obedience to a divine Command, that he made this Reformation, he told them, that it was written, *My Houſe ſhall be called an Houſe of Prayer*. This is the Character which the Prophet *Iſaiah* gives of it, chap. lvi. 7. and if it be an Houſe appointed for Prayer, and other religious Offices, then is it no proper Place for *the Tables of Money-changers, and the Seats of thoſe that ſell Doves*, who have the Markets of *Jeruſalem*, and their own Shops and Houſes to trade in.

The Expreſſion, *a Den of Thieves*, is thought by ſome to be an Alluſion to thoſe Gangs of Robbers, which, at this Time, infeſted *Judea*, and

uſed to hide themſelves in Holes, and Dens of the Mountains, as appears from the Hiſtory of *Joſephus* in ſeveral Places: But our Lord here plainly refers to that Paſſage in *Jeremiah*, where the Prophet introduces God complaining, *Is this Houſe, which is called by my Name, become a Den of Robbers in your Eyes? Behold, even I have ſeen it, ſaith the Lord*, chap vii. 11. But how could the Houſe of God become a Den of Robbers? How could ſuch Violence be committed in ſo ſacred a Place? St. *Jerom*, in his Commentary upon *Matth.* xxi. 12, 13. aſcribes all this to the Avarice of the Prieſts, and gives us a lively Deſcription of the ſeveral Artifices, whereby they endeavoured to enrich themſelves. "In the Temple of *Jeruſa-*
"*lem*, ſays he, the fineſt, and moſt ſpacious in the
"whole World, whither *Jews* aſſembled almoſt
"from all Countries, Sacrifices of different Kinds,
"ſome from the Rich, and others from the poorer
"Sort, were preſcribed by the Law; but, becauſe
"thoſe, who came from afar, often wanted ſuch
"Sacrifices, the Prieſts took the Advantage to buy
"up all thoſe Beaſts, which were appointed for
"this Purpoſe; and, having ſold them to thoſe
"that wanted, received them at their Hands back
"again. Becauſe ſome, who came to worſhip,
"were ſo very poor, that they had not Money
"enough to purchaſe ſo much as the leſſer Sacri-
"fices, which were Birds, to remedy this Incon-
"veniency, the Prieſts ſet up Bankers, in one of
"the Courts of the Temple, to lend them Money
"upon Security: But, finding that they could not
"do this, without tranſgreſſing the Law, which
"forbad Uſury, they had Recourſe to another
"Device, which was to appoint a kind of Pawn-

" brokers," inſtead of Bankers, *i. e.* Men, who, " for the Advance of a ſmall Sum, took Fruits, " Herbs, and other Conſumables, inſtead of Uſe- " money. Our Lord therefore having obſerved " this Way of Traffick, which the Prieſts had ſet " up in his Father's Houſe, not only expelled their " Agents, but arraigned them likewiſe for a Pack " of Thieves, *for he is a Robber*, ſays the Father, " *who makes Lucre of Religion, and whoſe Worſhip* " *is, not ſo much the Veneration he has for God, as* " *the Opportunity of making his own Intereſt and* " *Advantage.*"

Theſe Words, *Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings thou haſt perfected Praiſe*, are cited from *Pſal.* viii. 2. and ſeem to vary a little from the Original, which is thus rendered, *Out of the Mouth of the very Babes and Sucklings thou haſt ordained Strength.* But, when it is conſidered, that the only *Strength*, which can proceed from the Mouth of Children, muſt be *Praiſe*, or Words put into their Mouths, to celebrate the Praiſes of the *Meſſiah*, the Phraſe in the *Pſalmiſt*, and in the *Evangeliſt*, muſt needs mean the ſame Thing; and our Saviour, in the Application of it to the chief Prieſts and Scribes, ſeems to inſinuate, " That " theſe Acclamations of the Children were not " fortuitous, but by a divine Inſtinct, and for the " fulfilling of an ancient Prophecy; and that there- " fore their declaring him to be the *Meſſiah*, or " the Son of *David*, ſhould be looked upon as a " kind of Call from Heaven, to inform and inſtruct " them in what they were to do."

Who the *Grecians* were, who reſorted to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, the beſt of our Commentators are not agreed. Some are of Opinion, that they were

were mere *Gentiles*, who, either out of Curioſity, *viz.* to ſee the Magnificence of the Temple, the Solemnities of the Feaſt, or the Perſon of *Jeſus*, of whoſe Fame they had heard ſo much; or perhaps out of a Principle of Devotion, and to worſhip the God of *Iſrael*, might, at this Time, reſort to *Jeruſalem*: For the *Pagan* Religion, which admitted a Plurality of Gods, reſtrained none from worſhipping the Gods of other Nations, ſo long as they were not thereby tempted to abandon thoſe of their own. Others imagine, that they were real *Jews*, who being ſcattered in *Grecian* Provinces, after the Conqueſts, which *Alexander the Great* and his Succeſſors made of the *Jews*, ſtill continued in thoſe Countries, but kept ſo cloſe to their ancient Religion as to come, in great Numbers to *Jeruſalem*, upon the Return of every Paſſover. Theſe were generally called *Helleniſts*: And, that there was great Plenty of them in ſeveral Provinces of *Aſia* is manifeſt from St. *Peter*'s Addreſs of his firſt Epiſtle to the *Strangers* (as he calls them) who were ſcattered through *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia Minor*, and *Bithynia*, 1 *Pet.* i. 1. but the moſt general Opinion is, that theſe *Greeks* were *Proſelytes of the Gate*, who worſhipped the God of Heaven and Earth, lived among the *Jews*, and conformed to their political Laws, but would not engage in Circumciſion, or the Obſervance of their Ceremonies; and they came to *Jeruſalem* at this Time, not becauſe they were permitted to celebrate the Feaſt along with the *Jews*, but becauſe they were indulged the Privilege to behold their Solemnities, and to pay their Adorations to the Creator of the Univerſe (even while the *Jews* were in the Height of their

publick

publick Worſhip) in the Court of the *Gentiles*, as appears from the Caſe of the Eunuch of Queen *Candace*, Acts viii. 27.

Theſe *Greeks*, ſays *Grotius*, ſeem to have been *Syrophœnicians*, who dwelt perhaps about *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and ſo might eaſily be acquainted with the *Galileans*, with whom they had Commerce, and with *Philip* of *Bethſaida*, to whom they made Application for Acceſs to *Chriſt*.

Our Saviour's Words, upon comparing his Death to Corn ſown in the Ground, are not amiſs paraphraſed in this Manner, "Look, as you ſee in your "ordinary Husbandry, the Grains of Wheat are "firſt buried in the Earth, and loſe their Form, "before they ſpring and ſhoot up again, and "bring forth Fruit; ſo it muſt be with me. I "muſt be firſt liſted up, before I ſhall draw Men "after me; I muſt firſt be crucified, before my "Goſpel ſhall be preached to all Nations, and the "Fulneſs of the *Gentiles* ſhall come in. But when "I am once dead, and have riſen, then ſhall ye "ſee this abundant Fruit."

That Men might not have it to ſay, that our bleſſed Saviour, in point of Suffering, was no proper Example for our Imitation, becauſe he had no Dread of Death, or Senſe of Pain, to make Sufferings diſtaſteful to him, whereas we are moſt tenderly affected with theſe Things, he herein ſhews us, that he had the ſame natural Concern for Life, and Dread of Death, that we have, only that he over-ruled them by a Deſire of promoting his Father's Glory.

The only Way of Revelation, which the *Jews*, ſince the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and Extinction of their Prophets, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, pretend

pretend to, is that of *Bath-Koll*, or the *Daughter of a Voice*, ſo called, becauſe it has ſome Reſemblance (though as to its Diſtinctneſs, but an imperfect one) of that Voice, which was uttered from the *Holy of Holies*, when the Lord ſpake to *Moſes*; and (according to them) it is the Will of God revealed in Thunder from Heaven; and therefore, when our Saviour was anſwered by a Voice from Heaven, ſome of the Company thought it thundered, and others that an Angel ſpake, yet neither of them were miſtaken, becauſe in this *Bath-Koll*, there was alſo Thunder joined with an articulate Voice.

I have glorified it (meaning his Name) by cauſing my Glory to be publiſhed and proclaimed in the World, by thy Preaching, and by the Miracles which I have given in Teſtimony of thy Miſſion; *and I will glorify it again*, by thy Reſurrection and Exaltation to the *Right-hand of Glory*, by the Miſſion of the *Holy Ghoſt* upon thy Apoſtles, and by their carrying the *Sounds of the Goſpel even unto the Ends of the Earth.*

The Prophecies, from whence the *Jews* may be ſuppoſed to have drawn the Concluſion, *that the* Meſſiah *was to live for ever*, are, 2 *Sam.* vii. 16. where God, by the Mouth of *Nathan*, promiſes *David*, *Thine Houſe, and thy Kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever before thee, thy Throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever*; in much the ſame Words, wherein he had ſworn unto *David* himſelf, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 30. *His Seed will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the Days of Heaven.* To the ſame Purpoſe they found the Prophet *Iſaiah* promiſing, Chap. ix. 7. *My Servant* David *ſhall be their King for ever, and of his Government there ſhall be no End:*

End: But what ſeemed to expreſs the Matter in the cleareſt Terms was this Paſſage in *Daniel*, chap. vii. 13, 14. *and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the ancient of Days, &c. and there was given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, &c. his Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his Kingdom that, which ſhall not be deſtroyed.* Thus the *Jews* wrongfully applied to the Perſon of the *Meſſiah*, the Things, which related to his Kingdom; but then they gave little or no heed to what the ſame Prophets ſaid of the Body, wherein the *Meſſiah* was to ſuffer, and of his Hands and Feet, which were to be pierced, *Pſal.* xxii. 18. xl. 6. of his giving up his Life a Sacrifice for Sin, *Iſaiah* liii. 12. and of his being cut off, but not for himſelf, *Dan.* ix. 26. all which was not incompatible with his abiding for ever, ſeeing that, after his Sufferings, he was to riſe again, *Pſal.* xli. 10. and enter into Glory, 1 *Pet.* i. 11. So that, by comparing theſe Things together, they might have eaſily removed this Scruple, eſpecially when he had told them ſo often, and they ſo well remembered that he had told them, that, *after three Days, he would riſe again.*

It is pretended by ſome, that the Perſon, who preached in the Temple, was to have a Licence from the *Sanhedrim*, but that any might ſpeak publickly in the Synagogues without any ſuch Authority; becauſe we find our Saviour preaching in the latter, almoſt every *Sabbath-day*, without any Moleſtation. However this be, it was certainly a vain Queſtion, for the Chief-prieſts and Rulers to ask our Lord, *by whoſe Authority he did thoſe Things*, after

The Goaler in a fright falls down before
Paul & Silas. Acts 16. 29.

after they had ſeen his Miracles, and knew that he claimed his Commiſſion from God.

By the *Man* in the Parable, is ſignified *God*, and by his *two Sons*, the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*. The *Jews* are the ſecond Son; they promiſed to God a perfect Obedience, and yet did nothing: The *Gentiles* are the other Son, who, at firſt, refuſed to obey, and gave themſelves up to Idolatry, and all manner of Wickedneſs, but, upon the Preaching of the Goſpel, repented; and, after their Converſion, applied themſelves in earneſt to do the Will of God. The Parable, according to our Lord's own Interpretation of it, *Matth.* xxi. 32. is applicable likewiſe to two Kinds of *Jews*, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who pretended to ſo much Religion, and ſuch mighty Zeal for the Performance of the Law, when, in Reality, they obſerved none of its weightier Precepts; and the *Publicans* and *Sinners*, who, though at firſt they lived in Practices quite abhorrent to the Precepts of Religion, yet, upon the Preaching of *John the Baptiſt*, were ſeveral of them converted, and attending to the Doctrine of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, in Proceſs of Time, became obedient to their heavenly Father's Will, ver. 31.

For the Explication of the Parable of the *wicked Husbandmen*, we muſt obſerve, That the Houſeholder here, *Matth.* xxi. 33. is Almighty God, and the Vineyard is the *Jewiſh* People, conſidered in their ſpiritual Capacity; that his planting and hedging it about, ſignifies his peculiar Favour and Providence, in communicating to them his Will, and, by Laws and Ordinances peculiar to themſelves, diſtinguiſhing them from all other Nations, to be his own People; that the *Wine-preſs* and *Tower*,

and other ſuitable Conveniencies, denote the *Temple* and *Altar*, which he built among them, together with all thoſe Advantages and Opportunities of ſerving him acceptably, which he afforded them; that the *Husbandmen*, to whom this Vineyard was let out, were the *Prieſts* and *Levites*, the *Doctors* and *Rulers* of that Church and People, who are here repreſented as wanting in their Duty, and negligent in cultivating the Vineyard, or inſtructing the People committed to their Charge; that the Fruits are no other than Returns of Duty, proportioned to the Advantages of knowing, and performing it; that the Servants ſent to demand the Fruits, were the Prophets, whom God, from Time to Time, commiſſioned to reprove, exhort, and quicken to their Duty, both Prieſts and People, by Denunciations of Vengeance, and Promiſes of Reward; that the *Son*, whom he ſent at laſt, was our bleſſed Saviour, whom the *Jewiſh* Prieſts and Rulers treated in no better Manner, than they had done the Prophets of old, but, inſtead of reverencing him as the Son of God, and as he proved himſelf to be by divers Manifeſtations of divine Power, put him to a cruel and ignominious Death; and therefore well might the Lord of the Vineyard *deſtroy theſe wicked Men*, &c. as we find from the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian *Joſephus*, as well as other Writers, that God, for their great Impiety, brought the *Roman* Armies upon that Nation, and, by them, burnt their City and Temple, deſtroyed and diſperſed the People, and carried his Goſpel to the *Gentiles, to other Husbandmen, who ſhould render him the Fruits in their Seaſon*, ver. 41.

The *King*, in the Parable of the *Marriage Feaſt*, repreſents God the Father; the *Son*, the

Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* (who is frequently deſcribed as the Spouſe of his Church) and the *Marriage-Feaſt*, the Diſpenſation of the *Goſpel*. The *Gueſts*, that were firſt invited to the Feaſt, were the *Jews*; the *Servants* ſent forth to call them, were the *Prophets*, *John the Baptiſt*, and the *Apoſtles*; upon their Refuſal, the other *Gueſts*, brought in to ſupply their Room, were the *Gentiles*; and the Perſon who wanted the *Wedding-garment*, is an Emblem of all thoſe, who profeſs and receive, but do not live up to, the Principles of *Chriſt*'s Religion.

Here let us reſume the Story.

The *Phariſees*, who had as great a Share in the Application of theſe Parables, as any other, went away much enraged, and with a firm Reſolution to find out ſome Occaſion againſt him. To this Purpoſe therefore, they ſent ſome of their Diſciples, together with the *Herodians*, to propound this inſidious Queſtion to him, *Whether it was lawful for them to pay Tribute to* Cæſar, *or not?* never doubting, but that, which Way ſoever he anſwered, his Buſineſs was done; if in the Affirmative, the Multitude would deteſt him, as a Betrayer of their ancient Liberties; if in the Negative, the *Herodians* would then accuſe him, as a Rebel againſt the Emperor *Tiberius*: But he, knowing their treacherous Deſign, demanded a Sight of the Tribute-money, and when they acknowledged that the Signature on it was *Cæſar*'s, he ſent them away, quite confounded with this Anſwer, *Render therefore unto* Cæſar, *the Things that are* Cæſar's, *and unto God, the Things that are God's.*

Upon the Defeat given to to theſe two Parties, the *Sadducees* came to him with a Queſtion, and a Difficulty, that they thought inſurmountable. For,

as they had no Belief of a Reſurrection, they put a Caſe to him of one Woman, who, according to the Direction of their Law, had been married to ſeven Brothers ſucceſſively, and thereupon deſire to know whoſe Wife ſhe was to be at the general Reſurrection? In Anſwer to which our Lord gave them th underſtand, that though Marriage was neceſſary in this State, in order to raiſe up a Poſterity to mortal Man, yet that, after the Reſurrection, Men would be immortal and live like Angels, devoid of Paſſions, and incapable of Decay; and then proved the Reality of the Reſurrection from one of God's Appellations, in a Book, which themſelves allowed to be canonical.

The *Phariſees*, hearing the *Sadducees* were ſilenced, began to rally again; and one of their Doctors, in hopes to enſnare our Saviour, in caſe he ſhould prefer one Part of the Law above another, deſired to know his Opinion, *which was to be the greateſt Commandment of all?* Whereupon our Lord reduced the whole Law to two general Precepts, of equal Obligation to all Mankind, *the Love of God above all Things*, and *the Love of our Neighbour as ourſelves*; in the former of which we obey the *firſt*, and in the latter the *ſecond* Table of the Law; and with this Anſwer the Doctor was well pleaſed. When our Saviour had thus reſolved all their Queſtions, he, in his Turn, at laſt, put this one to them, *viz.* In what Senſe the *Meſſiah* could be *David*'s Son, when *David* himſelf, by divine Inſpiration, called him his Lord? But to this they could give no Anſwer, becauſe they were ignorant, that the *Meſſiah*, as God, was really the Lord of *David*, but as Man, and deſcended from his Family, he was his Son: And after theſe Diſputes

putes (which were the laſt he had with them) he went again, in the Evening, with his Diſciples, to *Bethany*.

Here it may be proper to take a Review of the foregoing Period of our Hiſtory.

The *Herodians* are commonly, and moſt probably, ſuppoſed to ſignify the Partiſans, and Favourers of *Herod*; but what their Principle was, as to the Matter now in hand, it is not ſo generally agreed. Some think them Enemies to the *Roman* Government, and that they only watched a favourable Opportunity to make *Herod*'s Family abſolute. Others think them intirely in the Intereſt of the Emperor, as *Herod* himſelf then was; for having, by his Indulgence, been advanced to the Regal State, he acted for, and under him, in collecting the Cuſtoms and publick Dues. This Opinion ſeems the more probable, becauſe it is more agreeable to the *Phariſees* preſent Deſign: For, had they ſent Perſons all of one Sentiment, *Chriſt* might have eaſily ſatisfied them all; but now, by ſending Men of different Judgments, they made it impoſſible for him to content both Parties; ſince, in determining for the Payment of the Tribute, he muſt have have given Offence to the *Phariſees*, and, in Effect, renounced thoſe Liberties and Privileges, which ſome of the *Jewiſh* Doctors inſiſted upon; and, in pronouncing againſt it, he was ſure to incur the *Herodians* Diſpleaſure, and make himſelf odnoxious to the Juriſdiction of the Civil Sword. The *Herodians* therefore may well be preſumed to have been Perſons of a Principle different to the *Phariſees*, whoſe Addreſs and Cunning, upon this Occaſion, ſeems to have lain chiefly in the Management of the Meſſengers.

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The State of the Queſtion, *Whether it was lawful for them to pay Tribute to* Cæſar, *or not*, truly taken, ſeems to be this,——The Government of the *Jews* had fallen into the Hands of the *Maccabees*, and, in Succeſſion, to one of them, named *Alexander*. He had two Sons, *Hyrcanus*, and *Ariſtobulus*, the younger of which made War upon the elder, and aſſumed to himſelf the Government. *Hyrcanus*, and his Party, being not able to reſiſt him, called in the Aſſiſtance of the *Romans*. *Pompey*, at their Requeſt, beſieges *Jeruſalem*, and had the Gates ſurrendered to him by a Faction within, that favoured *Hyrcanus*; but *Ariſtobulus* and his Adherents fought it out, till, at laſt, they were vanquiſhed and overpowered. The *Romans* put *Hyrcanus* in Poſſeſſion of the Government; but, at the ſame Time, obliged him to hold it by their Favour and Permiſſion, which laid the Foundation of great and laſting Diſſenſions among the *Jews*; ſome ſubmitting to the *Roman* Power, as thinking they had a fair Title both by Conqueſt and Surrender; while others objected, that the Surrender was made by a Party only, and not the whole Body of the People; that it was not Conquſt, but Treachery, which brought *Jeruſalem* to their Mercy; and, conſequently, that they were Uſurpers, and *Hyrcanus* and his Followers, Betrayers of their Country. That which contributed not a little to make this Controverſy ſtill greater, was, what *Joſephus* and *Euſebius* relate concerning *Judas* the *Gaulonite*. He, about the Time of the Taxation, in which (as St. *Luke* ſays) our Saviour was born, diſquieted the Minds of many, and repreſented the Decree of *Auguſtus* for that Purpoſe, as a Mark of Infamy and Servitude not to be born. This

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Man is ſaid to have inſtituted a particular Sect, one of whoſe Tenets was,——That no *Jew* ought to pay Tribute, or to acknowledge any Sovereign Lord, but God only, and that they were his peculiar People, and therefore bound to maintain their Liberty, eſpecially againſt profane and uncircumciſed Pretenders, ſuch as the *Roman* Emperors were. So that, the paying of Tribute to *Cæſar*, was not, at this Time, a Queſtion of meer Curioſity, but a Matter of Moment, with regard to Practice; nor was it a Point of Bravery only, in the Eſteem of the *Phariſees*, and others of that Party, but a Scruple of Conſcience, and a Debate of Religion, whether this Tribute ſhould be paid or not.

Every one knows that the *Roman* Emperors were wont to diſperſe their Money through all the Provinces belonging to their Juriſdiction; that this Money was ſtamped with the Image, or Buſt of the Emperor, on one Side; and on the Reverſe, with ſome Figure or other, repreſenting *Victory*, *Plenty*, *Peace*, or the like; and that this Tribute, or Capitation-Tax, (which, according to *Ulpian*, the Males from fourteen, and the Females from twelve Years old, were obliged to pay) was uſually collected in this Money, and no other, as the only current Coin at *Rome*.

Some Interpreters are of Opinion, that our Saviour's Words do not determine *Cæſar*'s Right to demand Tribute; but, ſince the *Jews* had now ſubmitted to the *Roman* Government (as they had formerly done to the *Aſſyrian*) which national Submiſſion (with Promiſe of Fidelity) having now obtained about an hundred Years, was a juſt Ground for *Cæſar*'s Right; ſince, beſides this, *Cæſar* had indulged them in the Exerciſe of their Religion,

and

and the Enjoyment of their civil Rights; had fought their Battles, and protected them againſt the common Enemy, the *Arabians*, and *Parthians*, and the like; ſince, more eſpecially, it was a received Maxim among the *Jews*, that whereever the Money of any Perſon was owned, as the current Coin of the Kingdom, there the Inhabitants acknowledged that Perſon to be their Lord and Governor; and ſince the *Jews* accepted, and trafficked with *Cæſar*'s Money, and held it current in all their Payments; our Sabiour's Anſwer, *Render therefore to* Cæſar, which is founded upon their own Principles, muſt needs be deemed a poſitive Declaration of *Cæſar*'s Right to receive Tribute, and ſuch other Acknowledgments, as belonged to the State and Dignity of the Poſt, wherein Providence had placed him. It might indeed be objected (ſays *Grotius*, on *Matth.* xxii. 20.) that the *Romans* ruled over the *Jews*, and *Cæſar* over the *Romans*, in Fact only, and without any Right to do ſo; but *Chriſt* ſhews, that this Objection ſignifies nothing to the Matter in hand: For, ſince Peace cannot be ſecured without Forces, nor Forces had without Pay, nor Pay without Taxes or Tribute; it follows, that Tribute ought to be paid to the Perſon actually governing (ſo long as he continues to govern) in Conſideration of the common Safety and Protection, which are ſecured by the preſent Poſſeſſor of the Government, whoever that Poſſeſſor be.

The Diſcourſe of the *Sadducees* was founded upon this Miſtake,———That, if there ſhould be a *Reſurrection of Bodies*, there would neceſſarily follow a Revival of the ſame Relations likewiſe, and that the State of the World to come would be like the State of this preſent World, in which, for the Pro-

Propagation and Continuance of Mankind, Men and Women marry, and are given in Marriage; which groſs Notion of theirs our Saviour endeavours to rectify.

The Words, which our Saviour produces in Proof of the Reſurrection, are thoſe which God uſes to *Moſes*, *I am the God of thy Father, the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob, *Exod.* iii. 6. and the Argument which is implied in them is this,——That, ſince to *be the God of any one* is a fœderal Expreſſion, which denotes God to be a kind Benefactor, who either doth, or will do Good to ſuch Perſons, as are in his Favour, and under his Protection; ſince *God is not the God of the Dead*, and can have no Regard or Conſideration for ſuch, as are meer *Non Entities*, or ſo dead, as never to return to Life again; and ſince, in this Life, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, received no ſuch ſignal Kindneſſes from the Almighty, as anſwers the emphatical Expreſſion of his being *their God*, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that God, in declaring himſelf to be *their God*, did ſolemnly engage himſelf to make them happy after this Life, according to what the Author to the *Hebrews* obſerves, *Wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God, in that he hath prepared for them a City*, Heb. xi. 16. This Way of arguing was of great Force againſt the *Sadducees*, who denied the Immortality of the Soul, as well as the Reſurrection of the Body; and, at the ſame Time, it fully proves the Reſurrection of the Body: For, ſince the Souls of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, were not the intire Perſons of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, which conſiſted of Bodies as well as Souls, it would from hence follow, that God could truly

be their God, *i. e.* their Rewarder and bounteous Benefactor, no other Way, than by a Reſurrection of their Bodies, to be re-united to their proper Souls.

The Perſon, whom we here render *Doctor*, is, by St. *Matthew*, xxii. 28. called a *Lawyer*, and by St. *Luke*, xx. 39. a *Scribe*; but in this Diverſity of Words there is no Difference of Senſe: For the *Scribes* were of two Sorts, or had at leaſt two Offices; the one was, *to ſit in the Chair of* Moſes, *Matth.* xxiii. 2. *i. e.* to read and interpret the Law of *Moſes* to the People; the other, to expound to them the Traditions, which they pretended to have received from their Forefathers. The Name of *Scribe* they ſeem to have derived from *Ezra*, (about 500 Years before *Chriſt*) who is ſo frequently ſtiled, *A Scribe of the Law of the Lord, who read in the Book of the Law, and expounded it*, *Ezra* vii. 12. *Neh.* xii. 36. and viii. 2, *&c.* And, becauſe the Traditions which they taught, and obliged the People to obſerve, were called *Laws*, they thence had the Appellation of *Lawyers*: And, as ſome of the Scribes were the Perſons appointed to copy out the Bible for ſuch as had Occaſion for it, and to take Care of the Preſervation of the Purity of the Text; ſo others employed themſelves in taking the like Pains about the Traditions of the Elders, and from thence very likely (tho' they were all of the ſame Order of Men) they might have different Denominations.

The Queſtion that this *Jewiſh* Doctor put to our Saviour, *viz. Which was to be accounted the greateſt Commandment of all?* was no frivolous or impertinent one, but what, at this Time, divided the greateſt Part of the learned Men among the *Jews*; ſome

ſome giving the Preference to the Obſervation of the *Sabbath*; others to the Ordinance of *Circumciſion*, and others to the Precept of *Sacrifices*; never conſidering the great Command recorded in *Deut.* vi. 5. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might*, or that other recorded in *Levit.* xix. 18. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*, until our Saviour reminded them of them.

That by our Neighbour here we are to underſtand every other Perſon, who is capable of Kindneſs from us, or ſtands in need of our Help, is evident from our Saviour's Determination in the Caſe of the *Jew* and the good *Samaritan*, from the Example we are called upon to imitate in this Affection, *viz.* the Love of God and our bleſſed Saviour; and from theſe Evangelical Precepts, which extends this Duty to all Men: But by the *loving our Neighbours as our ſelves*, it is not required, either that we ſhould love him from the ſame inward Principles, which excite our Affection to ourſelves, or that we ſhould love him to the ſame Degree and Proportion, that we love our ſelves, but only that we ſhould make the Affection, which we bear to ourſelves, the Rule we are to follow, in expreſſing our Love to him; or (in other Words) that we ſhould love him in all the Inſtances wherein we expreſs our Love to ourſelves, tho' not in an equal Meaſure.

The Words in the Text are, *On theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*, *Matth.* xxii. 40. which are a Metaphor, taken from the Cuſtom mentioned by *Tertullian* of hanging up their Laws in a publick Place, to be ſeen of all Men; and import, that in them is contained

all that the Law and Prophets do require, in reference to our Duty to God and Man. For, tho' there be ſome Precepts of Temperance, which we owe to ourſelves, yet are they ſuch, as we may be moved to perform from the true Love of God, and of our Neighbour. For the Love of God will preſerve us from all Impatience, Diſcontent, and evil Luſtings. It will make us watchful over ourſelves to keep a good Conſcience, as being ſollicitous for our eternal Welfare: And the Love of our Neighbour will reſtrain us from all angry Paſſions, ſuch as Envy, Malice, and other Perturbations, which ariſe againſt him; ſo that theſe two Commandments may be very juſtly called an *Abridgment*, or *Compendium* of the whole Scripture.

But to return to the Hiſtory from whence our Explanations have made us digreſs.

On the next Morning, as our Lord was returning to *Jeruſalem* the third Time, the Apoſtles, obſerving that the Fig-tree, which he had curſed the Day before, was withered away, and dead to the very Root, took notice of it to him, as a Thing very ſtrange and ſurprizing; whereupon he exhorted them to have ſtedfaſt Faith in God, Fervency and Perſeverance in their Prayers, and a forgiving Temper to thoſe that had offended them, in order to make their Prayers accepted, and then they ſhould not fail, in the Courſe of their Miniſtry, to perform as great, or greater Miracles, than this.

When our Lord was come into the Temple, he began to teach the People, as he had done the Day before; and, to raiſe an Averſion in his Diſciples, and in all that heard him, to the Principles and Practices

Practices of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, he took the Freedom to expose their Vices without Reserve; their Pride, their Hypocrisy their Covetousness, their Hardheartedness to Parents, Impiety to God, and Cruelty to his faithful Servants; and upon his mentioning this last Particular, he brake out into the same pathetick Exclamation against *Jerusalem*, for her murdering the Prophets, and other Messengers sent from God, that had been the Matter of his frequent Lamentations before.

Before he left the Temple, he took notice, how the People threw their Money into the Treasury; and among many, who offered very plentifully, observing a poor Woman cast in her two Mites (which amount to no more than a Farthing) he called his Apostles, and assured them, that that poor Woman had been more liberal than any of the rest, because their Oblations proceeded from their Superfluity, but she from her Indigence had given all she had.

In the Afternoon, as they were returning to *Bethany*, his Apostles took a View of the several Buildings of the Temple, and were making their Remarks of the Largeness of its Stones, the Richness of its Ornaments, and the Beauty and Stateliness of the whole; when our Saviour acquainted them, that, how glorious soever it might appear at present, it would not be long before the whole Structure should be so intirely ruined, that there should *not so much as one Stone be left upon another*.

The general Notion was, that this Temple was to laste even until the End of the World. And therefore when our Saviour had seated himself upon Mount *Olivet*, in full View and Prospect of it, his Apostles desired to know, when this Destruction

ſtruction would happen, and what would be the previous Signs of it. The Signs of it, he told them, would be the Coming of many Impoſtors, and falſe *Chriſts*, the Rumours of Wars, and Famines, and Peſtilences, dreadful Earthquakes, Prodigies, and amazing Sights in the Air, the Perſecution of *Chriſtians*, and the Propagation of the Goſpel all the World over: But that they might eſcape the Calamity, which would ſuddenly come upon their Country, and utterly deſtroy the *Jewiſh* State and Government, he advertiſed them, that, whenever they ſhould ſee the City of *Jeruſalem* inveſted with Armies, and the Temple polluted with Abominations, they might then conclude, that this Diſſolution was approaching, and that therefore it was high Time for them to provide for their Safety by a quick Retreat.

Of the preciſe Time of its Coming, however, no created Being (as he told them) could certainly know; and therefore it was incumbent upon them to keep themſelves in a State of perpetual Watchfulneſs, in a faithful Diſcharge of their reſpective Duties, and in a conſtant Perſeverance in Prayer to God; all which he endeavoured to inforce with ſeveral Parables, ſuch as that of the *faithful Servant*, whom his Maſter, at his Return from a Journey, found employ'd in his proper Buſineſs, when he of a contrary Character was ſurprized in his Riot and Debaucheries, and accordingly puniſhed; that of the *wiſe and fooliſh Virgins*, who were differently prepared at the Coming of the Bridegroom; and that of the Talents, intruſted with *diligent* and *ſlothful* Servants. And, as this Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* was no ſmall Emblem of the final Conſummation of all Things, from hence he proceeds to deſcribe the Manner of his Coming

to

to the laſt and general Judgment, when, ſurrounded with the refulgent Rays of his Majeſty, and ſeated upon his bright Throne of Glory, with all the holy Angels of Heaven attending him, he ſhall ſummons all the People, that ever lived in the World, to appear before him; and, having made Inquiſition into the Diſcharge of the great Duty of Charity, ſhall puniſh or reward Mankind, according as he finds that they have acquitted themſelves in this Reſpect.

The following Notes will explain the Difficulties in the foregoing Paſſages.

'Tis remarked of our bleſſed Saviour's Miracles, that they were all Works of Mercy and Beneficence; and that, if any of them had a contrary Tendency, they were always ſhewn upon brute and inanimate Creatures, and that too, not without a charitable Intent of conveying ſome ſymbolical Inſtruction to the Spectators, as this Withering of the Fig-tree was to repreſent to the *Jewiſh* Nation their approaching Doom.

The Command to forgive thoſe that have offended us, before we pray, not only ſhews, that no Reſentments of what our Brother hath done ſhould ſtick long upon our Spirits, becauſe they indiſpoſe us for that Duty which we ought to be continually prepared for, but that there is likewiſe ſome kind of Forgiveneſs to be exerciſed, even towards him that does not ask it, nor ſhew any Tokens of his Repentance, *viz.* that we ſhould not only free our Minds from all Deſires of Revenge, and ſo far forget the Injury, as not to upbraid him with it, but be inclined likewiſe to ſhew him Kindneſs, and ready to do him any good Turn: For what the Law required of a *Jew* to do to his Enemies Beeaſt, *Exod.* xxiii. 4, 5. that, without all Controverſy,

troverſy, the Goſpel requires of a *Chriſtian* to do to his offending Brother.

It was a common Saying among the *Jews*, when they were minded to commend any of their Doctors for his great Dexterity in ſolving difficult Queſtions, that *ſuch an one was a Rooter up of Mountains*; and, in Alluſion to this *Adage*, our Saviour tells his Diſciples, that *if they had Faith, they might ſay to a Mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the Sea, and it ſhould be done*, Matth. xxi. 21. *i. e.* that, in Confirmation of the *Chriſtian* Faith, they ſhould be able to do the moſt difficult Things. For, beſides that our Saviour's Words are not to be taken in a literal Senſe, they are likewiſe to be reſtrained to the *Age of Miracles*, and to the Perſons to whom they were ſpoken, *viz.* the Apoſtles, and firſt Propagators of the *Chriſtian* Religion, becauſe Experience teaches us, that this is no ordinary and ſtanding Gift belonging to the Church.

The firſt Inſtitution of the *Jewiſh* Treaſury, we find in 2 *Kings* xii. 9. where it is ſaid, that *Jehoiada the Prieſt took a Cheſt, and bored an Hole in the Lid of it, and ſet it before the Altar, on the Right-ſide, as one goeth into the Houſe of the Lord, and the Prieſts, that kept the Door, put therein all the Money, that was brought into the Houſe.* This Money was, at that Time, given for the Reparation of the Temple, and, in after Ages, the Money caſt into the Treaſury, even in our Saviour's Time, was deſigned, not only for the Relief of the Poor, but for ſacred Uſes, and the adorning of the Temple; which might occaſion *Joſephus* to ſay, That the Temple was built not only with the Bounty of *Herod*, but with the Money contained

St Luke ij Evangelist, Penman of ij Gospel, of ij Acts of ij Apostles, & St. Pauls Companion in his Travels.

tained in the holy Treaſury likewiſe, and with the Tributes, which were ſent from all Parts of the World.

Joſephus, who gives us a Deſcription of the Temple built by *Herod*, tells us, among other Things, that *the whole Fabrick was made of durable white Stone, ſome of which were five and twenty Cubits long, eight in Height, and twelve in Breadth.* The Ornaments of the Temple were the Spoils, which their Kings had taken in War; the rich Preſents, which foreign Princes, upon certain Occaſions, had made; and the coſtly Gifts, which the *Jews*, from all Parts of the World, uſed to ſend to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*. Theſe were hung againſt the Walls, and the Pillars of the Temple, for the People to behold; and, when *Herod* had re-built it, he not only re-placed all the former Ornaments, but added ſeveral others, eſpecially the Spoils which he took in his War with the *Arabians*, and a Vine of maſſy Gold, of prodigious Weight and Value, which was his own free Gift.

The Prophecy of our bleſſed Saviour, of the entire Ruin of the Temple, was, in great meaſure, accompliſhed about forty Years after; when (as ſeveral *Jewiſh* Authors tell us, *Taurus*, i. e. *Terentius Ruſus*, whom *Titus* left chief Commander of the Army in *Judea*, did with a Plow-ſhare tear up the Foundations of the Temple, and thereby ſignally fulfilled the Words of the Prophet, *Therefore ſhall* Zion *for your ſakes be plowed as a Field, and* Jeruſalem *ſhall become Heaps, and the Mountain of the Lord as the high Places of the Foreſt*, *Micah* iii. 12. It can hardly be thought however, but that, notwithſtanding this Demoliſhment, there might probably be *left one Stone upon another*, and

therefore ſomething more was wanting towards the literal Completion of our Saviour's Prophecy, to which the Emperor *Julian*, in ſome Meaſure, contributed: For, having given the *Jews* Licence to re-build their Temple at *Jeruſalem*, they took away every Stone of the old Foundation to help to build their new Edifice; but Heaven prevented their Deſign: For Flaſhes of Lightning (as our beſt Hiſtorians tell us) burſt out from the Foundation they had dug, and ſo blaſted and terrified them, that they were forced to give over their Enterprize, after they had pulled up, and removed all the Remains of the old Temple.

Never were there ſo many Impoſtors, or falſe *Chriſts*, as in the Time a little before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, (*Joſeph. Antiq.* l. xx. c. 6.) doubtleſs becauſe this was the Age, wherein the *Jews*, from the Prophecy of *Daniel*, were taught to expect their *Meſſiah*.

Beſides the War which the *Jews* waged with the *Syrians*, not long before the Deſtruction of their City (*Joſ. Antiq.* l. ii. c. 19.) the Conteſts between *Otho* and *Vitellius*, and *Vitellius* and *Veſpaſian* at *Rome* were much about the ſame Time, and the Oppreſſion of the Governors of *Judea*, who minded nothing but to inrich themſelves, had ſo irritated the Minds of the People, that, for ſome Time before their final Calamity, we read of nothing but Rebellions and Revolts, Parties and Factions, and Bands of Robbers harraſſing and infeſting the Country.

In the fourth Year of *Claudius* (as *Euſebius* informs us) there happened a great Famine, which oppreſſed all the *Roman* Empire, but more eſpecially *Paleſtine*, where many periſhed (according to *Joſephus*) for lack of Food. And the ſame Hiſtorian

ſtorian informs us, that, when one *Niger* was ſlain by the *Jews*, he imprecated Famine and Peſtilence upon their Cities, which God accordingly inflicted.

In the Reigns of *Claudius* and *Nero*, there happened many Earthquakes in *Aſia Minor* and the Iſles of the *Archipelago*, where the *Jews* inhabited; (*Euſeb. Chron.* and *Tacit. Annal.* l. 2.) And *Joſephus* acquaints us that in the Night, when the *Idumæans* encamped before *Jeruſalem*, *there blew a dreadful Tempeſt of Wind and Rain, accompanied with ſuch terrible Flaſhes of Lightning, Claps of Thunder, and bellowing of Earth-quakes, that put all People to their Wits end to think, what theſe Prodigies might portend.*

In his Preface to the Hiſtory of the Wars of the *Jews*, *Joſephus* undertakes to record the Miſeries and Calamities, which befel that Nation, and the Signs and Prodigies, which preceded their Ruin. To this Purpoſe he tells us, that, for a whole Year together, a *Comet*, in the Figure of a Sword, hung over the City, and pointed as it were directly down upon it; that there were ſeen, in the Clouds, Armies in Battle-array, and Chariots, encompaſſing the Country, and inveſting their Cities; that, at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, in the middle of the Night, a great Light ſhone upon the Temple and Altar, as if it had been Noon-day; that, at the ſame Feaſt the great Gate of the Temple, made all of maſſy Braſs, and which twenty Men could hardly ſhut, opened of itſelf, tho' faſtned with Bolts and Bars; that, at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, ſoon after, when the Prieſts went into the Temple to officiate, they heard, at firſt, a Kind of confuſed Noiſe, and then a Voice calling out earneſtly, in

articulate Words, *Let us be gone, let us be gone*; and that theſe Prodigies were really ſo, we have the Teſtimoney of *Tacitus*, a *Roman* Hiſtorian of that Age.

That Part of our Saviour's Prediction concerning the Perſecution of *Chriſtians*, was literally fulfilled before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. Aſſoon as *Chriſtianity* began to ſpread, the *Jews* wrote Letters to every Part of the World againſt the Profeſſors of it, in order to raiſe Perſecutions againſt them. St. *Paul*, before his Converſion, *breathing out Threatnings, and Slaughter againſt the Diſciples of Chriſt*, Acts ix. 1. *ſhut up many of them in Priſon, both Men and Women*, Acts xxii. 4. xxvi. 10. himſelf, when converted, and *Silas*, were not only impriſoned, but beaten in the Synagogue, *Acts* xvi. 23. as were likewiſe *Peter* and *John*, *Acts* v. 18. *Stephen*, the firſt Martyr, was ſlain by the Council, *Acts* vii. 59. *James the Greater*, by *Herod*, *Acts* xii. 1. and *James the Leſs*, by *Ananus* the High-prieſt: Multitudes of *Chriſtians* were perſecuted to Death by *Saul*, *Acts* xxii. 4. by the *Jews*, as *Juſtin Martyr* teſtifies; and by the Emperor *Nero*, as *Tacitus* relates, *Annal.* l. 15. for the Profeſſors of our moſt holy Religion, before the Principles of it came to be enquired into, were looked upon as the common Enemies of Mankind; inſomuch that whoſoever killed them, thought that he did God Service, *John* xvi. 2.

That before the Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* State the *Chriſtian* Religion had ſpread itſelf over all the Parts of the then known World, we may reaſonably conclude from the Labours of St. *Paul*, who alone carried the Goſpel through *Judea*, *Syria*, *Arabia*, *Greece*, *Macedonia*, *Achaia*, *Aſia*

Asia Minor, *Italy*, &c. And if the other Apoſtles, whoſe Travels we are not ſo well acquainted with, did the like, there is no doubt to be made, but that *their Sound went into all the Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of the World*, Rom. x. 18. St. *Peter* addreſſes his firſt Epiſtle to the Elect, that were in *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia*, and *Bithynia*; and *Clemens*, who was his Contemporary, and immediate Succeſſor to the See of *Rome*, in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, tells us, *that the Nations beyond the Ocean were governed by the Precepts of the Lord.* An Event this! which he only could foretel, who having all Power in Heaven and Earth, was able to effect it.

Immediately after the Tribulation of thoſe Days, ſhall the Sun be darkened, and the Moon ſhall not give her Light, and the Stars ſhall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heavens ſhall be ſhaken, *Matth.* xxiv. 29. that theſe Words are not to be taken in a literal Senſe, 'tis plain, becauſe that, after the Sacking of *Jeruſalem* by *Veſpaſian*'s Army, no ſuch Thing as is here mentioned happened to the Sun, Moon, or Stars. Theſe Expreſſions therefore muſt be metaphorical, and do here denote, as they frequently do in the Writings of the Prophets, and other Authors, the intire Deſtruction and utter Deſolation, which is brought upon any Nation. For in this Language the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaks of the Deſtruction of *Babylon*: *The Day of the Lord cometh, cruel, both with Wrath and fierce Anger, to lay the Land deſolate, and he ſhall deſtroy the Sinners thereof out of it: For the Stars of Heaven, and the Conſtellations thereof ſhall not give their Light; the Sun ſhall be darkened in his going forth, and the Moon ſhall not cauſe her Light to ſhine,*

ſhine, chap. xiii. 9. which, according to *Maimonides*, are *proverbial Expreſſions, importing the Deſtruction, and utter Ruin of a Nation, and of ſuch Perſons more eſpecially, who, for their State and Dignity, might be compared to the Sun, Moon, and Stars.* Accordingly, the Senſe of our Saviour's Words muſt be,——That, after the taking and deſtroying of *Jeruſalem*, God's Judgments would ſtill purſue the People, ſo that thoſe who ſurvived the Ruin of their Country, ſhould be diſperſed into different Regions, ſold for Slaves, or reduced to a Condition worſe than Slavery. And ſo the Event proved: For thoſe that were carried to *Rome*, ſerved only to adorn the Triumph of their Conqueror: Thoſe that fled to *Antioch* for Shelter, were cruelly maſſacred there: Thoſe, that maintained the Caſtle of *Maſſada*, rather than fall into the Hands of the Enemy, agreed to ſlay one another: Thoſe that eſcaped to *Thebes* and *Alexandria*, were brought back, and tortured to Death; and thoſe of *Cyrene*, who joined a falſe Prophet, named *Jonathan*, were all cut to Pieces by the *Roman* General. All this happened immediately after the taking of *Jeruſalem*; and, without any farther Search into their Hiſtory, is enough to verify our Saviour's Expreſſion, that *the Sun was darkened, and the Moon gave no Light* upon that wretched People.

The Deſolation which the *Jews* ſuffered in this laſt War with the *Romans*, was ſo vaſtly great, that all Hiſtory can ſcarce furniſh us with an Example of the like Nature. The Number of the Slain was Eleven hundred thouſand; the Number of Priſoners was Ninety-ſeven thouſand. Thoſe that were above ſeventeen, were ſent into *Egypt* to work

work in the Mines; thoſe that were under that Age, were ſold for Slaves into different Countries; and a great Number of others were diſtributed in the *Roman* Provinces, to be expoſed to wild Beaſts on the *Theatre*; and, as Gladiators, to kill one another, for the Sport and Diverſion of the Spectators: *Until the Cities were waſted without Inhabitant, and the Houſes without a Man, and the Land was utterly deſolate, and the Lord had removed Men far away, and there was a great Forſaking in the midſt of the Land*, as the Prophet expreſſes it, *Iſai.* vi. 11, 12.

The *Chriſtians* took the Advice of our Saviour: For when *Ceſtius Gallus* had beſieged *Jeruſalem*, and, without any viſible Cauſe, on a Sudden, raiſed the Siege, the *Chriſtians* that were in the City took this Opportunity to make their Eſcape to *Pella* in *Paræa*, a mountainous Country, and to other Places under the Government of King *Agrippa*, where they found Safety. Thus punctually were all the Predictions of our Saviour fulfilled; ſo that *whoever ſhall compare them* (as *Euſebius*, in his *Eccl. Hiſt.* l. iii. c. 7. expreſſes it) *with the Account of* Joſephus, *concerning the War of the* Jews, *cannot but admire the Wiſdom of* Chriſt, *and own his Predictions to be divine.*

The Puniſhment inflicted on the evil Servant is ſaid to be *cutting aſunder*, Matth. xxiv. 51. In the ſame Manner as *Samuel* uſed *Agag*, 1 Sam. xv. 33. and *David* the *Ammonites*, 2 Sam. xii. 31. and *Nabuchodonoſor* threatened the Blaſphemers of the true God, *Dan.* iii. 29. This Puniſhment was, in old Times, inflicted on thoſe that were falſe to their Creditors, Rebels to their Prince, or Betrayers of their Country; nor was it in uſe only among the *Eaſtern* People, but among the *Romans*, as

as we learn from *Suetonius* in the Life of *Caius*, and among the *Greeks*, as *Homer*, *Sophocles*, and *Ariſtophanes* informs us: And therefore this Puniſhment, ſays our Saviour, will I inflict on thoſe, that are perfidious to their Covenant in Baptiſm, and Enemies to my Government.

The better to underſtand the Parable of the *wiſe and fooliſh Virgins*, we ſhould do well to obſerve what the Cuſtom at Marriages was, to which our Saviour ſeems to allude. When the Bridegroom was to bring home his Bride (which was generally the concluſive Ceremony, and done in the Night-time) the young Women of the Town, to which ſhe was to come, in order to do her Honour, went to meet her with lighted Lamps: She too, according to her Quality and Condition, had her Companions and Servants attending her, and ſome of the moſt beautiful Ladies of the Place, from whence ſhe came, going before her. And moſt of our modern Travellers inform us, that among the *Eaſtern* People (eſpecially the *Perſians*) this Way of conducting the Bride home, with Lamps and lighted Torches, ſtill prevails. None need be told, that by the Bride-groom we are to underſtand our Saviour *Chriſt*; by the Bride, his Church; by the Virgins, Chriſtians in general; and by the *Oil in their Lamps*, the neceſſary Qualifications of Faith and good Works.

For an Explication of the Parable of the Talents entruſted with diligent and ſlothful Servants we may obſerve, that the Man *travelling into a far Country*, is our Saviour *Chriſt*, who, by aſcending into Heaven, has deprived the Church of his corporal Preſence; that his Servants, are *Chriſtians* in general, or, more particularly, Apoſtles, and firſt Miniſters, who ſucceeded him in the Propagation of the Goſpel;

Goſpel; and the Talents committed to their Management, are the ſuper-natural Gifts which he beſtowed upon them, and all the Endowments both of Body and Mind, all the Helps and Means, and Opportunities which he gives us, in order to ſerve him, and to work out our Salvation.

The Reaſon of our Lord's mingling the Signs of the particular Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and of the general Diſſolution of the World together, was to engage us, at the Approach of particular Judgments upon Cities and Nations, to be always mindful and prepared for the general Judgment of the laſt Day.

That the Throne of Glory, upon which *Chriſt* ſhall ſit at the laſt Day, will be nothing elſe but a bright and refulgent Cloud, we have Reaſon to believe, from the Teſtimony of the Angels that attended at our Lord's Aſcenſion. For while the Apoſtles, then preſent, were *looking ſtedfaſtly towards Heaven, as he went up, behold two Men ſtood by them in white Apparel, who alſo ſaid, Ye Men of* Galilee, *why ſtand ye gazing up to Heaven? This ſame* Jeſus, *which is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like Manner as ye have ſeen him go into Heaven*, Acts i. 9, 10. which compared with our Lord's own Declarations concerning his ſecond Coming, *Mark* xiii. 26. with what St. *Paul* foretels, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 17. and St. *John* foreſaw, *Revel.* xiv. 14. are abundantly ſufficient to juſtify the generally received Opinion, that, as our bleſſed Saviour went up into Heaven, ſo he ſhall return them to Judgment, upon a true and material Cloud.

The Manner in which our Saviour expreſſes himſelf, upon this Occaſion, ſeems to imply, that

the general Judgment is to be held in ſome particular Place; and, from a Paſſage in the Prophet *Joel*, ſeveral modern, as well as antient Doctors, are of Opinion, that the Valley of *Jehoſhaphat* is appointed to be the Place: *For I will gather all Nations*, ſays God, *and will bring them down into the Valley of* Jehoſhaphat, *and I will plead with them there for my People, and for my Heritage* Iſrael, Chap. iii. 2. but as the Word *Jehoſhaphat*, in that Text, ſignifies the *Judgment of God*, the Valley of *Jehoſhaphat* denotes any Place, in general, where God exerciſes his Judgments. The Truth is, if all Nations of the World muſt appear before *the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt*; and, that they may receive the Things done in the Body, are to be cloathed with their Reſurrection Bodies, there muſt neceſſarily be required a large Space to contain them; and therefore St. *Paul* ſeems to point out the grand Expanſum of the Air, as the moſt convenient for that Purpoſe.

Return we now to our Hiſtory. As ſoon as our Lord had finiſhed this prophetick Diſcourſe, he went, in the Evening, to *Bethany*, and there ſupped at the Houſe of one *Simon*, whom he had formerly cured of a Leproſy. At Supper, *Mary*, to teſtify her Love and Reſpect, came, and, out of an Alabaſter Cruſe, poured a large Quantity of ſuch rich Ointment upon his Head, as filled the whole Houſe with its fragrant Smell. This ſeeming Prodigality raiſed the Indignation of the Reſt of the Apoſtles, as well as *Judas*; and, as they made the ſame Objection, ſo our Saviour's Defence of *Mary* turns upon the ſame Topicks; only he adds, *that, as ſhe had done a great and generous Action, whereſoever his Goſpel ſhould be preached through the whole World, there ſhould her munificent*

munificent Regard to him be likewiſe publiſhed, to her everlaſting Honour and Renown.

When Supper was ended, our Lord repaired to his uſual Lodgings, at *Martha*'s Houſe; and on the Day following, (in all Probability) continued at *Bethany*, without going to *Jeruſalem*, as he had done the Day before. In the mean Time the *Sanhedrim* aſſembled at the Palace of *Caiphas*, the High-prieſt, where the Prieſts, Scribes and Elders of the People, had a ſolemn Debate and Conſultation, how they might take *Jeſus* by ſome ſecret Stratagem, and put him to death. This was the ſecond Council, that they had held upon this Occaſion; and though therein it was determined that he ſhould die, yet they thought it not ſo adviſable to put the Thing in Execution, in the Time of this Solemnity, leſt it ſhould cauſe a Sedition among the People, who had the higheſt Veneration for him.

When Evening was come, he, with his Apoſtles, ſupped (very probably) at *Martha*'s Houſe; and while they were at Table, conſidering with himſelf that his Time was now ſhort, he was minded to give them a Teſtimony of his Love; and, from his own Example, teach them two Virtues, which, of all others, were more eſpecially requiſite in their Miniſtry of the Goſpel, Humility and Charity. To this Purpoſe, riſing from the Table, laying aſide his upper Garment, and girding himſelf with a Towel (as the Manner of Servants then was, when they waited on their Maſters) he poured Water into a Baſon, and began to waſh his Apoſtles Feet, and wipe them with a Towel. Amazed at this Condeſcenſion, St. *Peter* (when he came to him) refuſed, at firſt, to admit of ſuch a ſervile Office from his heavenly

Maſter; but when he urged the Neceſſity, and, in ſome Meaſure, intimated to him the ſymbolical Intent of it, he permitted him to do juſt what he thought fit.

When our Lord had made an end of waſhing his Apoſtles Feet, he put on his Garment, and ſat down at Table again, and began to tell them the Meaning of what he had done, *viz. That ſince he, who was juſtly acknowledged to be their Lord and Maſter, had ſo far debaſed himſelf, as to waſh their Feet; they, in Imitation of his Example, ought to think it no Diſparagement to them, to perform the meaneſt Offices of Kindneſs and Charity to one another: For tho' they were exalted to the Dignity of his Apoſtles, yet ſtill they were but his Servants; and therefore it would be an high Piece of Arrogance in them, to aſſume more State and Grandeur, than their Maſter had done before them.*

Soon after this, reflecting with himſelf, how well he had loved, and, upon all Occaſions, how kindly he had treated theſe his Diſciples, he was not a little concerned, that any of them ſhould prove ſo baſe and ungrateful to betray him; and when he had declared the Thing, and *Peter*, deſirous to know the Perſon, beckoned to *John*, who was neareſt his Maſter, to ask him the Queſtion; he ſignified to him, that it was *Judas Iſcariot*, to whom he gave a Sop (as he told *John* he would) and when he had ſo done, *bad him go about what he had to do with all Expedition*; which the reſt of the Apoſtles, being ignorant of the Signal which our Lord had given *John*, ſuppoſed to be an Order to *Judas* (as he was the Purſe-bearer) either to give ſomething to the Poor, or to provide what was neceſſary for the Feaſt.

As

As ſoon as Supper was ended, *Judas* being now confirmed in his wicked Reſolution, left *Bethany* in haſte; and underſtanding that the *Sanhedrim* was met at the High-Prieſt's Houſe, thither he repaired; and, upon giving him a ſufficient Reward, offered to betray his Maſter, and (in the Manner they deſired) to deliver him privately into their Hand. This Propoſition was highly pleaſing to the Council; who immediately bargained with him for thirty Pieces of Silver: And when *Judah* had received the Money, from that Moment he ſought an Opportunity to betray his Maſter, in the Abſence of the Multitude.

While *Judas* was thus bartering for his Maſter's Blood, his Maſter was preparing the Reſt of his Diſciples for his Departure, and endeavouring to comfort them with this Conſideration, that his Death would be a Means to diſplay both his own, and his Father's Glory, as it was a Preliminary to his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion into Heaven. As therefore it was decreed that he muſt leave them, the ſtronger ſhould their Union be with one another; and therefore he recommended, very earneſtly to them, the Duty of mutual Love; a Duty which had been hitherto ſo much neglected, that his enjoining it might well be accounted a *new Commandment*, and what was to be the common Badge and Character of his true Diſciples for ever after.

When the Day before the *Feaſt of the Paſſover* was come, our Lord ſent *Peter* and *John* to *Jeruſalem*, to prepare all Things according to the Law; and leaſt they ſhould want a convenient Room for the Celebration of the *Paſchal* Supper, he had pre-diſpoſed the Heart of a certain Hoſt

in the City, to accomodate them with one. And therefore, having provided a Lamb, ſlain it in the Temple, ſprinkled its Blood on the Altar, and done every Thing elſe that was required of them, they returned to their Maſter at *Bethany*: For he perceiving that his late Diſcourſe, about leaving the World and them, had blaſted all their Hopes of ſecular Greatneſs, and left them melancholy and diſconſolate, ſtayed a good Part of the Day with them at *Bethany*, to raiſe their drooping Spirits, with the Aſſurances of an happy Immortality; which (as he told them) he was to prepare for them in Heaven, and wanted not Power to do it, becauſe he and his Father (as to their Divinity) were perfectly the ſame; and with the Promiſe of ſending them the Holy Spirit from above, which he took Care to repreſent, as a Comforter, to ſupport them in Afflictions; as a Teacher to inſtruct them in all neceſſary Truths; and as an Advocate to plead and defend their Cauſe againſt their Enemies. So that they had no Reaſon to be dejected, becauſe in this Senſe he would be always with them; becauſe, whatever they asked in his Name, his Father would give them; and becauſe, when he was gone, they ſhould be enabled to do Miracles, greater than what they had ſeen him do; and therefore *Peace I leave with you*, ſays he, taking his Farewel, *my Peace I give unto you: Not as the World giveth, give I unto you; let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Here we may add ſome explanatory Notes on the foregoing Paſſages.

According to the Tradition of the Church, the Conſultation, which the *Sanhedrim* held, and the Agreement which *Judas* made with them to betray

tray our Lord, were on *Wedneſday*; and therefore they give it as a Reaſon, why they faſted on *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*, becauſe on the one *Chriſt* was betray'd and ſuffer'd on the other.

Caiphas, the High-prieſt, is called, by the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, *Joſeph*. The High-prieſthood he purchaſed of *Valerius Grachus*; and, after he had ten Years enjoyed that Dignity, was depoſed by *Vitellius*, Governor of *Syria*, and ſucceeded by *Jonathan*, the Son of *Ananus* or *Annas*.

The Pieces of Silver which *Judas* received to betray his Maſter, were *Staters*, or *Shekels of the Sanctuary*; Thirty of which amounted to three Pounds and fifteen Shillings of our Money; the uſual Price that was given for a Man or Maid Servant, *Exod.* xxi. 32. 'Tis hardly ſuppoſable that any of theſe Pieces are at this Time extant, tho' both at *Rome* and *Paris* there are Pieces ſhewn, which are pretended to be the very ſame that were Part of the Price of the Purchaſe of our Saviour's Blood; but Perſons well skilled in that Art, aſſure us, that theſe Pieces are only the antient Medals of *Rhodes*; on the one Side ſtamped with a *Coloſs*, which repreſents the Sun, and on the other a Roſe, which was the City Arms, as we call it.

The Diſciples of the *Baptiſt* were known by the Auſterity of their Lives, and the Diſciples of the *Phariſees* by their Habit and Separation from other Men; but our bleſſed Saviour was willing to have his Diſciples known by their mutual Love and Affection to each other; which, in the primitive Ages, was ſo great, that it made the *Heathens*, with Admiration cry out, *See how they love one another!* and even hate and envy them for their mutual Affection.

With

With reſpect to the Feaſt of the Paſſover, to which our Saviour was about to repair, St. *Matthew* ſays, Chap. xxvi. 17. *It was the firſt Day of the Feaſt*; but it is no uncommon Thing to put the Word *firſt* for that which properly *went before*. Thus in the *Old Teſtament* it is ſaid, *that the Hands of the Witneſſes ſhall be* firſt *upon him*, that is condemned to die, *to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hands of all the People*, Deut. xvii. 7. but if the Hands of the Witneſſes ſhould firſt diſpatch him, there would be no Occaſion for the Hands of the People. In the firſt Book of *Maccabees*, it is twice ſaid of *Alexander the Great*, that he reigned *firſt* over *Greece*, Chap. i. 1. and vi. 2. but every one knows, that before him there were ſeveral Kings in *Macedonia*; and therefore the Meaning of the Words muſt be, that he reigned in *Macedonia*, *before* he reigned in *Aſia*: And, to the ſame Purpoſe, in the *New Teſtament*, we find St. *Paul* ſtiling our bleſſed Lord *the Firſt-born of every Creature*, Coloſſ. i. 15. *i. e* begotten of the Father *before* the Production of any Creature; and telling us, that *the Husbandman that laboureth muſt* firſt *partake of the Fruits*, i. e. he muſt Labour *before* he can reap the Fruits of his Travel; and, in like Acceptation of the Word, the *firſt* Day of the Feaſt, may be interpreted the Day *before* the Feaſt, as might be proved likewiſe by *Heathen* Authors.

It is to be obſerved, that the Houſes in *Jeruſalem*, at this Time of the Feaſt, were of common Right to any that would eat the Paſſover in them; and yet it is not unlikely, that our Lord might be well known to the Maſter of the Houſe; who, very probably, took it as an high Honour, that he

A Woman *powrs an Alabaster Box of Prescious Ointment on our Saviours Head.*

S^t. Mark. Chap. XIV.

reformed, and haſt caſt my Words behind thee. When thou ſaweſt a Thief thou conſentedſt unto him, and haſt been Partaker with the Adulterers, Pſal. l. 16. *&c.* But all this is mere Gueſs-work: And it ſeems more prudent to ſay nothing of the Actions of our Saviour, when we are not admitted to the Reaſons of them.

The *Rabbinical* Writers tell us, that, when a Man or Woman was convicted of Adultery, they were led out to the Brow of an Hill, with their Hands tied behind their Backs, where their Accuſers puſhed them down headlong; that, if with the Fall they were killed, there was no more done to them; but if they were ſtill alive, the ſame Accuſers were to roll great Stones upon them, and if theſe did not diſpatch them, the Company then all took up Stones, and quite overwhelmed them with them. But we have nothing of all this in the Law of *Moſes*. In all the Places where he makes Mention of this Puniſhment, we only find, that the Criminal was to be led out of the City *and ſtoned with Stones till he died,* and that, *the Hands of the Witneſſes ſhould be firſt upon him, to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hands of all the People,* Deut. xvii. 7. 'Tis in Alluſion to this Paſſage that our Saviour ſays, *Let him, that is without Sin among you, caſt the firſt Stone,* becauſe it badly becomes thoſe, who are guilty, either of the ſame, or greater Crimes, to be ſo zealous for the Puniſhment of others. This however hinders not, but that Magiſtrates, who are intruſted with the Execution of the Laws, ſhould put them in Force againſt Malefactors, even tho' themſelves are not intirely exempt from Sin; but ſtill it reminds them, that they ſhould execute Judgment

with Compaſſion and Tenderneſs, and as much Moderation as the Law will allow them; conſidering that they themſelves are not free from Guilt, but as obnoxious to Puniſhment for other Sins, as thoſe poor Creatures are, who have fallen into Crimes that are puniſhable by human Judicatures.

In the very next Words it is ſaid, that the Woman *ſtood in the Midſt of the People*, and our Lord's Apoſtles, who were his conſtant Attendants, were doubtleſs not far from him; the Meaning therefore of the Expreſſion muſt be, that ſhe was left without any of her Accuſers, who, out of Shame, ſneaked away, being convicted in their Conſciences, that, whatever the Woman was, they were no proper Evidences againſt her: Nor is it to be wondered, that, upon this Occaſion, all the Woman's Accuſers departed from her, ſince the *Jews* themſelves own, that Adulteries did *multiply under the ſecond Temple*, when their *Rabbins* came to permit every one *to have four or five Wives, and ſaid, that they ſinned not, if, after the Example of the Patriarchs, when they ſaw a beautiful Woman, they deſired to have her.*

Both *Selden* and *Fagius* are of Opinion, that this Woman might come under the Number of them, whoſe Caſe is thus repreſented in the Words of *Deuteronomy*. *If a Damſel, that is a Virgin, be betrothed to an Husband, and a Man find her in the City, and he lie with her, then ye ſhall bring them both out unto the Gate of the City, and ye ſhall ſtone them with Stones, that they die; the Damſel, becauſe ſhe cried not, being in the City; and the Man, becauſe he hath humbled his Neighbour's Wife*, Deut. xxii. 23, 24. The Puniſhment of *ſtoning*, which this Law mentions, and the Accuſers of this

this Woman here inſiſt on, ſeem to favour this Notion; and the Indulgence which our Saviour ſhewed her, looks as if ſhe had ſuffered ſome Kind of Violence, tho' ſhe was not intirely innocent. Our Saviour however could not act in the Capacity of a Judge, becauſe that was no Part of his preſent Miniſtry: Tho' therefore he was ſo far from approving her Conduct, that he ſufficiently blamed her, in biding her *ſin no more*, yet was he reſtrained from pronouncing any Sentence of Condemnation upon her, becauſe the End of his Coming at this Time into the World was *not to judge the World, but to ſave it*, John xii. 47.

The Power, which our Saviour gave to the *Seventy*, when he ſent them out to preach the Goſpel, was only that of *healing the Sick* where-ever they went, *Luke* x. 9. but finding that, upon naming their Maſter's Name, they were, able likewiſe to cure thoſe that were poſſeſſed of Devils, this they made the greater Matter of their Joy, and, at their Return, told it with more Pleaſure, becauſe it was no Part of their Commiſſion. It is to be obſerved however, that our Lord himſelf caſt out Devils by a divine Power reſiding in himſelf; his Diſciples only in Virtue of his Name, or by a Power derived from him. Seeing then that this Power accompanied them in all Parts of the World, 'twas neceſſary that *Chriſt*'s Preſence ſhould be with them every-where, and ſuch a Preſence was a certain Proof of his being God.

Our Saviour's Promiſe that they ſhould tread on venomous Beaſts without Hurt, ſeems to have a plain Alluſion to thoſe in the *Pſalmiſt*, where, under the Metaphor of *treading on the Scorpion and Baſilisk*, Pſal. xci. 13. God promiſes the good

Man a more than common Protection from all ſorts of Dangers and Enemies. But there is no Reaſon however, I think, why our Saviour's Words may not here be taken in a literal Senſe, ſince they agree ſo well with what he promiſes all true Believers in another Place, *they ſhall take up Serpents* (as we find one faſtened upon St. *Paul*'s Hand without doing him any Harm, *Acts* xxviii. 3.) *and if they drink any deadly Thing, it ſhall not hurt them,* Mark xvi. 18.

The Words, that *their Names were written in Heaven,* allude to a known Cuſtom in well-governed Cities, where Regiſters are kept of the Names of their Inhabitants, and do plainly denote the Title, which Believers have to eternal Happineſs; but by no Means an abſolute Election to it. For, as a Citizen, when he misbehaves egregiouſly, and thereupon becomes infamous, has his Name razed out of the City-Regiſter, and is himſelf diſinfranched of all his Privileges; ſo we read of ſome, whom *Chriſt* threatens *to blot their Names out of the Book of Life,* Revel. xxii. 19. For, *as Men are written in this Book* (ſays St. *Baſil* on *Iſaiah* iv. 3.) *when they are converted from Vice to Virtue, ſo they are blotted out of it, when they backſlide from Virtue to Vice.* Of the *Twelve* we read that one was certainly a Reprobate, and tho' it becomes us to hope better of the *Seventy,* yet our Saviour's Words give us no room to think, that they were all predeſtinated to eternal Life, ſince his only Meaning is, That he had called, choſen, and ſeparated them, from great Numbers that would periſh; that he had given them the Grace of Faith and Admiſſion to the *Chriſtian* Covenant, but that, on themſelves it was incumbent, by the

Pre-

Preſervation of their Faith, and the Practice of good Works, comporting therewith, *to make their Calling and Election ſure.*

The Law of *Moſes* does no-where expreſly promiſe eternal Life to thoſe, that obſerved its Precepts. It is wholly taken up with temporal Bleſſings and Proſperities; and yet the Generality of the *Jews* were not deſtitute of the Hopes of another Life; for their Writers, a little before, and after the Captivity, are very full of it, ſo that it became the prevailing Opinion of the whole Nation, and was received by their two principal Sects, the *Phariſees* and *Eſſenes*; as for the *Sadducees*, who had other Notions of the Matter, their Religion was very little, and their Principles purely *Epicurean.*

In our Saviour's Time, the *Phariſees* had reſtrained the Word *Neighbour* to ſignify thoſe of their own Nation, their own Religion, and their own Friends only; and all who differed from them in any of theſe Reſpects, they indulged the People the Liberty to hate, nor would they permit them to extend the leaſt Office of common Civility to any ſuch. But our Saviour overthrew theſe falſe Maxims of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, and reduced the Precept of univerſal Charity to its firſt Intention, when, in this Parable of the *Jew* and the *Samaritan*, he plainly demonſtrated that no Difference of Nation or Religion, no Quarrel or Reſentment, no Enmity or Alienation of Affections, can exempt us from owning any Perſon to be our Neighbour.

Between *Jeruſalem* and *Jericho* (which were about ſeven Leagues diſtant) the Road was very infamous for Murders and Robberies, for in it was a Place called the Valley of *Adommim*, or of *bloody*

bloody Men, becauſe of the great Quantity of Blood that was there ſpilt; and for this Reaſon it is, that our Lord lays the Scene of his Parable in this Place.

To make the Deſcription more lively, our Saviour inſtances in two Men, a *Prieſt* and a *Levite*, who took no Pity of this *Jew* in Diſtreſs, though they were of the ſame Religion and Country; nay, tho' they were Miniſters and Teachers of the Religion which he profeſſed; and might therefore be preſumed, even in Virtue of their Office and Education, to have more extenſive Notions, and Hearts more capable of tender Impreſſions, than the ruder Vulgar; and, for the ſame Reaſon, he introduces a *Samaritan*, as acting a different Part, and taking all imaginable Care of this wounded *Jew*, tho' between the *Jews* and *Samaritans* there was a moſt inveterate Hatred.

The Words in the Text are, *pouring in Wine and Oil*; Oil, to eaſe and aſſuage the Pain; and Wine, to cleanſe and heal the Wound: And theſe Things the good *Samaritan* had about him, becauſe the Inns in the *Eaſtern* Countries (even as it is ſtill) afforded nothing but barely Houſe-room; and therefore the Cuſtom was, for the Traveller to carry all kinds of Neceſſaries, both for his Bed and Board, along with him.

The Words in the Text are, *when he departed he took out two Pence*, Luke x. 35. The *Greek* Word which we render a *Penny*, was a kind of *Roman* Coin, much about *ſeven Pence Half-penny* in our Money. In the *New Teſtament* (for it never occurs in the *Old*) it is uſually put for a Piece of Money in general, *i. e.* for a *Shekel*, which was the moſt common Coin among the *Jews*, before they

they became ſubject to the *Greeks* and *Romans*; ſo that, in this Senſe, what the *Samaritan* gave the Hoſt amounted to *five Shillings*, or thereabout, which is more conſiſtent with the reſt of his Character, than that he ſhould leave ſo ſmall a Matter behind him.

Had our Saviour propounded the Parable in this Manner,——That a certain *Samaritan* fell among Thieves, and that a *Prieſt* and a *Levite* paſſed by without offering him any Help, this Doctor of the Law might have replied, that he did nothing but right, becauſe the *Samaritan* was no Neighbour of theirs: But now, as he makes a *Jew* the Subject of the Parable, and the Object of the *Samaritans* Compaſſion, he draws him in to acknowledge the Voice of Nature, which declares that every Man is Neighbour to his Fellow-creature, and that the Law of *Moſes* has not annulled, but perfected the *Law of Nature*, by commanding us to *love our Neighbour as ourſelves*, Levit. xix. 18.

We now go on with our Story thus:

Aſſoon as the *Feaſt of Tabernacles* was ended, our Lord departed from *Jeruſalem*, and, in the Beginning of his Journey, went to a ſmall Village called *Bethany*, about two Miles *Eaſt* of *Jeruſalem*, where he was joyfully received by a Woman named *Martha*, who, with her Siſter *Mary*, and her Brother *Lazarus*, was highly in Favour with him. While *Martha* was buſy in making Preparation for his Entertainment, her Siſter *Mary* ſat with the Company, liſtening to his Inſtructions; and when *Martha* complained to him, that her Siſter had left the whole Burden of the Buſineſs upon her, and thereupon deſired him to ſend her to her Aſſiſtance, our Lord commended *Mary*'s Choice; and, tho' he did not ſlight *Martha*'s Civility,

vility, yet her Siſter's Devoutneſs and Attention to his Doctrine (which was the one Thing chiefly neceſſary) he preferred before it.

Upon his Return to *Galilee*, as he was one Day praying with his Diſciples in a private Place, they, taking it into Conſideration, how neceſſary it was for them to be directed in the right Performance of that Duty, deſired of him to compoſe a Form of Prayer for their Uſe, as the *Baptiſt* had done for his Diſciples: Whereupon he not only gave them the ſame excellent Form (called the *Lord's Prayer*) which he had given them above eighteen Months before, in his Sermon on the Mount, but encouraged them likewiſe, from the Conſideration of God's Goodneſs and fatherly Affection (far more indulgent to his Children than any earthly Parents were to theirs) to be conſtant in their Petitions to him, with Fervour, Importunity, and an indefatigable Perſeverance, as the likelieſt Way to obtain a gracious Anſwer to them.

Not long after this, upon our Lord's curing a *Demoniac*, that was dumb, the *Phariſees* renewed their old diabolical Cavil, of his ejecting Devils by *Beelzebub*, which he confuted by the ſame Arguments he had formerly uſed upon that Account; and when they again demanded of him a Sign from Heaven, he again made them the ſame Reply: Nay, not only ſo, but when he was invited to Dinner, one Day, by a certain Perſon of that Sect, who was not a little offended at his ſitting down to Meat without waſhing his Hands, he took Occaſion from thence to inveigh very ſeverely againſt their ridiculous Superſtition, in affecting outward Neatneſs in their Manner of Living, while they neglected to cleanſe their Souls from internal Pollutions. And ſo, proceeding to reproach both

Writings of their *Rabbins, viz.* that they uſed this leaning Poſture, as Freemen do, in Memory of their Freedom; and therefore, though at their ordinary Meals, they commonly ſat at Table, as we do; yet, whenever they were minded to regale themſelves, they uſed this Poſture of *Diſcumbency*, and eſpecially at the *Paſchal Supper*, no other was allowed. Thus lying on Beds or Couches, made for that Purpoſe, with a Table before them, whereon they leaned, they ſtretched out their Feet behind them, thereby to remove the leaſt ſhew of ſtanding to attend, or to go upon any one's Employment, which might carry in it any Colour of Servitude, or contrariety to their Freedom. And from this Poſture of ſitting, or leaning upon a Table with their Elbow, one after another, we rightly underſtand thoſe Texts, which ſpeak of the beloved Apoſtle's leaning on the Boſom, or on the Breaſt of *Jeſus*, as the learned *Lightfoot*, in his Diſcourſe of the Temple-Service has amply ſhewn.

It is a great Queſtion among the Antients, whether *Judas* was preſent at our Lord's Inſtitution of the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, or abſented himſelf before. St. *Luke*'s Words, which are ſubſequent to the Inſtitution, *Behold the Hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the Table*, Chap. xxii. 21. ſeem to imply that he was preſent, and partook of the *Euchariſt*; but many Commentators are of a contrary Opinion, *viz.* that after our Saviour had declared him to be the Man, who ſhould betray him (which was between the *Paſchal* and *Euchariſtical Supper*) he immediately left the Company, and went away; and that conſequently there is a Miſlocation in St. *Luke*'s Words.

The Reaſon which our Saviour gives for our participating of the Cup, *viz. Becauſe it is the Blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins*, concerning the Laity, as well as the Prieſts, becauſe his Blood was equally ſhed for both; and therefore the Command, *Drink ye all of this*, to which the Reaſon is annexed, concerns them likewiſe. But there is another Reaſon, why our Lord ſaid to his Apoſtles, *Eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, viz.* that, by ſo doing, they might remember his Death, his Body broken, and his Blood equally ſhed for them, ſays St. *Luke*, and *ſhew it forth till his ſecond Coming* 1 Cor. xi. 26. Now this, as St. *Paul* demonſtrates, concerns all Believers, as well as *Prieſts*, and therefore the *drinking of the Cup* (by which this Commemoration is made) as well as *eating of the Bread*, muſt equally concern them.

Some are of Opinion, that by the *Kingdom of God* here (as in ſeveral other Places) we are not to underſtand Heaven, or the Happineſs we are there to enjoy, but rather the Goſpel State, and the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, which began at his Reſurrection, and was more fully eſtabliſhed when *he ſat down at the Right-Hand of Power, and was made Heir of all Things*; and conſequently, that our Lord's drinking of Wine, may then relate to this *eating and drinking with his Diſciples, after he aroſe from the Dead*, Acts x. 41. but, becauſe the Felicities of Heaven are frequently repreſented under the Metaphors of eating and drinking, *Matt.* viii. 11. *Luke* ii. 30. others make the Senſe of our Saviour's Words to be this, *I will not hence forth drink of the Fruit of the Vine, but both you and I, in my Father's Glory, ſhall be ſatisfied with Rivers of Pleaſure, far ſweeter, and*

more

more excellent than the richeſt Wines can be. There is, however, a third Way of interpreting this Paſſage, which, by comparing it with the Words of St. *Luke*, ſeems by much the more probable; and that is, by making the Fruit of the Vine ſignify, in a peculiar Manner, the Cup in the Paſſover, or the Cup of Charity in the *Poſtcœnium* of the Paſſover, wherein the Sacraments of *Chriſt*'s Body and Blood was founded. For, that *Chriſt* was now to die, and neither before or after his Reſurrection, to eat any more Paſſovers with his *Apoſtles*, or any more to drink the Cup of Charity, now deſigned to a *Chriſtian* Uſe, is ſufficiently evident. It is obſervable, therefore, in St. *Luke*, Chap. xxii. 16. that the Words are directly applied to the *Paſſover*; *I have deſired to eat this Paſſover, for I will no more eat of it*; and by repeating the *Cup*, Ver. 18. the *Evangeliſt* muſt mean *the Cup of the Paſſover*, or the *ſacramental Cup of Charity*, which ſucceeded it; and conſequently our Saviour's Meaning muſt be, That he would no more uſe theſe typical Adumbrations, being himſelf now ready to perform what was ſignified and expreſſed by them, *i. e.* to paſs ſuddenly from Earth to Heaven, through a Red Sea of Blood, and there to compleat the Myſtery of the Sacrament, by uniting his Diſciples one to another, and making them all Partakers of his heavenly Riches.

It is commonly remarked by profane Authors, that the Cock uſually crows twice in a Night; once about Midnight, and the ſecond Time at the fourth Watch of the Night, or much about Break of Day; that this latter, as being the louder and more obſervable, is that which is properly called *Cock-crowing*; and that, of this Crowing of the

Cock the *Evangeliſts* are to be underſtood, when they relate *Chriſt*'s Words thus, *before the Cock crow* (*i. e.* before that Time of Night, which is emphatically ſo called) *thou ſhalt deny me thrice*, appears from St. *Mark*'s Saying, that the Cock crowed after his firſt Denial of *Chriſt*, and crowed the ſecond Time, after his third Denial.

Though to be of good cheer under Tribulation, does by no means infer that Firmneſs of Mind (as ſome Philoſophers of old miſcalled it) which preſerves a Man from being at all afflicted with Calamities, or moved from his uſual Eaſineſs of Temper; yet thus much it certainly means, That neither the Sharpneſs of any Afflictions we feel, nor the Terror of any we fear, ſhould ſo far vanquiſh our Reaſon and Religion, as to drive us upon unlawful Methods of declining the one, or delivering ourſelves from the other. We are to ſatisfy ourſelves in the Juſtice, the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of him, who orders all the Events that befal us; to entertain them all with Meekneſs and much Patience; to bring our Wills into Subjection to the divine Will; to rejoice in the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, and preſerve it at any Rate, tho' with the Hazard, nay, certain Loſs of all our worldly Advantages; and to ſet the Supports and Rewards of perſecuted Truth, and afflicted Piety, in Oppoſition to all the Diſcouragements and Preſſures from Abroad, and all the Frailties of feeble and too-yielding Fleſh and Blood at Home.

By the World, in this Paſſage, (*I have overcome the World*) we are, no doubt, to underſtand the Evil of the World, the Wickedneſs, the Malice, the Temptations, the Troubles, all that we have

Reaſon

Reaſon to fear, or to flee from, either in this or the next Life. Now the Wickedneſs of the World *Chriſt* has overcome, by expiating the Sins of Mankind in the Sacrifice of himſelf upon the Croſs; and by the powerful Aſſiſtance of his Grace, enabling all the Faithful to conquer the Paſſions of corrupt Nature. The Malice of it he overcame, by diſappointing the Deſigns of the *Devil*, and his wicked Inſtruments againſt himſelf, and his Goſpel, making his own Sufferings fatal to the Contrivers, and ſaving to all penitent Believers. The Temptations of it he overcame, by that ſevere, but ſtill ſocial Virtue, and heavenly Piety, which ſhone ſo bright in all his Converſation; and the Troubles of it by ſubmitting to Hunger and Thirſt, to Poverty and Grief, to live like the worſt of Men. Even Death itſelf, our laſt and moſt dreaded Enemy, he has overcome, taken from *this ſtrong Man the Armour wherein he truſted, and divided his Spoils.*

The Hymn ſung by our Lord and his Diſciples at his laſt Supper, by moſt Interpreters to be Part of the great *Allelujah*, which began at the cxiiith and ended at the cxviiith *Pſalm*; and, by the *Jewiſh Rituals*, was ordered to be ſung conſtantly at the *Paſchal-Supper*. Others think that it was a different Hymn, compoſed by *Chriſt*, and accommodated to the particular Inſtitution of the *Euchariſt*: But *Grotius* is of Opinion, that it was no other than that Thankſgiving of his, which St. *John* has recorded in the xviith Chapter of his Goſpel. As our bleſſed Saviour, however, in all his religious Conduct, was no Lover of Innovations, it ſeems more probable, that, upon this Occaſion, he made uſe of the *Pſalms* that were then cuſtomary in the *Jewiſh* Church, in which

(as the *Jews* obſerve) are mentioned the Sorrows of the *Meſſiah*, and the Reſurrection of the Dead.

The Brook *Cedron*, in the *Old Teſtament*, is called *Kidron*, and runs along the Bottom of the Valley of *Jehoſhaphat*, which lies to the *Eaſt* between *Jeruſalem* and Mount *Olivet*. Into this Valley was conveyed the Blood, poured out at the Foot of the Altar, which, as it diſcoloured the Water, gave it the Name *Cedron* (as ſome think) from the Word *Kiddar*, which ſignifies *Blackneſs*; tho' others rather imagine that it had that Name from the Cedar-Trees that were planted on each Side of it.

The Garden of *Gethſemane*, which took its Name from the Wine-Preſſes in it (as Mr. *Maundrel* inform us) is an even Plat of Ground, not fifty ſeven Yards ſquare, lying between the Foot of Mount *Olivet*, and the Brook *Cedron*. It is well planted with Olive-trees, and thoſe of ſo old a Growth, that they are believed to be the ſame that ſtood here in our Saviour's Time; but this is hardly poſſible. At the upper Corner of the Garden is a flat naked Ledge of Rock, ſuppoſed to be the Place, on which the Apoſtles *Peter*, *James* and *John* fell aſleep, during our Lord's Agony: A few Paces from thence is a Grotto, in which he is ſaid to have undergone that bitter Part of his Paſſion; and (what is very remarkable) in the Midſt of the Garden there is a ſmall Slip of Ground, twelve Yards long, and one broad, reputed the very Path, on which the Traytor *Judas* walked up to *Chriſt*, when he ſaid, *Hail Maſter, and kiſſed him*, which the *Turks* themſelves have walled in, as accounting the very Ground accurſed, on which was acted ſuch an infamous Tragedy.

The

The Paſſage in *Zachariah*, to which our Saviour alludes, when he tells them what ſhould befal both him and them, that very Night, is this, *Awake, O Sword, againſt my Shepherd, and againſt the Man that is my Fellow, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. Smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep ſhall be ſcattered, and I will turn my Hand upon the little ones*: where we may obſerve, that our Saviour only cites the Words in the Middle of the Verſe, becauſe, indeed, thoſe that both preceded and followed them, were not at all to his Purpoſe: And in this he imitated the antient Doctors of the *Jewiſh* Church, who, in their Allegations of Scripture-paſſages, were wont to make uſe of no more than what was ſubſervient to their Argument. Some, however, imagine, becauſe the Words in *Zachariah* ſeem primarily to relate to an evil Shepherd, to whom God threatens the Sword, that *Chriſt* does not mention them as a Prediction concerning him and his Apoſtles, but only as a proverbial Expreſſion: But this, I think, is ſufficiently confuted, by our Lord's ſaying, *for it is written*. Nor is the Change of the Perſon in the *Evangeliſt*, from what occurs in the Prophet, of any Moment, becauſe it was cuſtomary with the *Jewiſh* Doctors, in their Citations of Scripture, to make ſuch Alterations.

We may be bold to affirm of St. *Peter*'s Reſolution, that it was an honeſt one, *i. e.* both as juſt in the Matter, and as ſincere in the Intention, as ever was made by Man, or ever ſhall be made to the End of the World; and yet this Reſolution miſcarried, and ended only in the Shame of the Reſolver. St. *Chryſoſtom* takes Notice of three Faults that may be reckoned in it. Firſt, The little Conſideration

ſideration *Peter* had of our Saviour's Predictions concerning his Fall. Secondly, The Preference which he gave himſelf above the Reſt of his Brethren: And Thirdly, The Preſumption he placed in his own Strength, inſtead of imploring Ability of him, whence all human Sufficiency is derived; and therefore the Son of God, ſays he, ſuffered him to fall, in order to cure his Arrogance and vain Confidence in himſelf.

Our Saviour's Obſervation, that tho' *the Spirit was willing, yet the Fleſh is weak*, are not intended, as an Excuſe or Mitigation of the Apoſtles ſinful Neglect of their Maſter, but as a Motive to their Vigilance and Prayer, and ſeem to imply thus much,——*You have all made large Promiſes*, that if you ſhould die with me, you would not forſake me; *and this you ſaid really, and with a Purpoſe to do it: Yet let me tell you, when the Temptation actually aſſaults, when Fear, Shame and Pain, the Danger of Puniſhment, and of Death, are within View, and preſent to your Senſe, the Weakneſs of the Fleſh will certainly prevail over theſe Reſolutions, if you uſe not the greateſt Vigilance, and do not pray with Fervency for the divine Aſſiſtance.*

The Words in the original Text, concerning our Lord's ſweating large Drops of Blood, but only that it was thick and viſcous, like Blood falling from the Noſe, in a ſmall Clot, at the End of any one's Bleeding; but, ſince in ſome Diſtempers (as *Ariſtotle* tells us) it is no uncommon Thing for People to ſweat Blood; and, when Men are bitten with a certain Kind of Serpents in *India* (according to the Account of *Diodorus Siculus*) they are tormented with exceſſive Pains, and generally ſeized with a bloody Sweat, we cannot ſee, why

this

Christ *appears to* Mary Magdelen *immedeately after his Resurrection.*

S^t Mark. Chap. XVI.

this Agony of our Saviour's might not be ſo violent, as to force Blood out of his Capillary Veſſels, and mix it with Sweat.

St. *Luke* is the only *Evangeliſt* that makes mention of the Attendance of an Angel upon our Saviour, in this Time of his Agony; and as there were ſeveral, both *Latin* and *Greek* Copies, that, in St. *Jerom*'s Time wanted this Part of the Hiſtory, *Epiphanes* imagines, that this was a Correction of ſome ignorant, though, perhaps, well meaning *Chriſtians*, who, being offended at the ſuppoſed Weakneſs that appears in our Saviour, upon this Occaſion, left it out of their Copies; never conſidering that the Divinity which dwelled in him, had, at this Time, ſubſtracted its Influence, ſo that being left to his human Nature only, he needed the Comfort of an Angel: Otherwiſe, as with a Word, he made the whole Band of Soldiers fall to the Ground, and with a Touch healed the Ear of *Malchus*, he even now gave ſufficient Indications of the Divinity reſiding in him.

At the Time of the Paſſover, it was cuſtomary for the *Roman* Preſident to ſend a whole Band of a thouſand Men, for a Guard to the Temple; and it ſeems to be ſome of theſe that came to apprehend our Saviour, becauſe, by *Judas*'s giving them a Sign, whereby they might know him, it looks as if they were Strangers to his Perſon.

It is probable he thought they could not apprehend our Saviour, but that, as *Jeſus* had, at other Times, conveyed himſelf from the Multitude, when they attempted to ſtone him, *John* viii. 59. and to caſt him down a Precipice, *Luke* iv. 30. ſo he would have done now; and that, when he found he did not reſcue himſelf, *he repented and went and hanged himſelf*, Matt. xxvii. 5.

The Reproof is expreſſed in theſe Words, —— Judas *betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs?* Luke xxii. 18. Firſt, To betray, in this Caſe, was equivalent to Murther. It was to deliver him into their Hands, who he knew, both from common Rumour, and his Maſter's own Words, *Matt.* xvi. 21. had a Deſign upon his Life; and therefore this could not be done without expreſs Malice; but Secondly, This Betrayer was a Servant, one who had given up his Name and Faith to our Lord, and done himſelf the Honour, at leaſt, if no other Benefit, to preach his Goſpel, and to work Miracles by the Power of his Commiſſion; and therefore, for ſuch an one to betray him, could not be done without great Perfidiouſneſs. Thirdly, The Perſon betrayed is called the *Son of Man*, which is both the humbleſt and moſt obliging of our Saviour's Titles, and implies, that even to *Judas* himſelf he had always been a kind and gracious Maſter, had treated him with the ſame Reſpect, and given him the ſame Advice and Overtures, that he had done to the reſt of the Twelve; and therefore to betray him was high Ingratitude. Fourthly, and laſtly, To betray him with a Kiſs, which all the World had been uſed to interpret as a conſtant Symbol either of Love, or Homage, (both which his Maſter had ſo well merited at his Hands) and now to make this a Signal of his Treaſon, was to play a Piece of the moſt groſs Hypocriſy. So ſevere is the Accuſation, which our Lord brings againſt his abandoned Apoſtle, tho' expreſſed in the mildeſt Terms!

Before our Saviour left the Houſe where he ſupped, he had ſaid to his Apoſtles, *He that has no Sword, let him ſell his Garment and buy one,*

Luke

Luke xxii. 36. but that this is no Command to them to buy Swords, or to uſe them in the Defence of their Maſter, when he ſhould be apprehended, is apparent from his ſaying, that two Swords were enough, Ver. 38. which certainly could never be ſufficient to repel that Band of armed Men, which he fore-knew would come againſt him; and from his reprehending *Peter* for uſing one in this Manner, *Matt.* xxvi. 52. which, if he intended his Words to be underſtood literally, was no diſcommendable Thing. They therefore are only an Admonition to his Apoſtles, that Times were now become ſo perilous, that if Things were to be acted by human Power, there would be more need for Swords than ever; for ſuch ſymbolical Ways of Expreſſion were very common among the *Eaſtern* People. Some Annotators, however, have obſerved, that the Reaſon why any Swords (as we read but of two) were found in our Saviour's Family, was, that thereby they might ſecure themſelves from Beaſts of Prey, which, in thoſe Parts, were very frequent, and dangerous in the Night-time.

Our Saviour's Words to *Peter*, are theſe, *Put up thy Sword into its Place, for all that take the Sword, ſhall periſh by the Sword*, Matt. xxvi. 52. But this Rebuke we muſt not ſo underſtand, an abſolutely forbidding all Manner of uſing the Sword among *Chriſtians*, but only as teaching us the great Duty of Submiſſion to the Powers that are ſet over us. One private Perſon is, no doubt, in Defence of himſelf againſt the Aſſault of another private Perſon, permitted to unſheath his Sword; but if he once granted, that private Perſons, when they think themſelves injured by Magiſtrates, may

take up the Sword againſt them, Tumults would be endleſs, and the Authority of the Laws, and the Deciſion of Judges precarious: *If therefore neither the Malice of the* Jews, *nor the Innocence of our Lord; if neither the Truth of our Religion, perſecuted in its Founder, nor the apparent Marks of Malice and Envy, of Violence and Oppreſſion, which appeared in the whole Courſe of their Perſecution of him, were ſufficient to warrant* St. Peter *to draw the Sword, in his Defence, againſt the legal Authority, by which they acted, we muſt conclude, that neither will any of theſe Pretences ſuffice to juſtify any other Chriſtians in the like Circumſtances now: But if it pleaſe God, at any Time, to permit the lawful Powers to be againſt us, we muſt ſubmit patiently to their Authority, and not, with this warm Apoſtle, draw the Sword againſt thoſe to whom God has committed the Power of the Sword.* It may be queſtioned, however, whether this is the true Import of the Words, which *Grotius*, and ſome other have thus interpreted,——*Put up thy Sword; there is no need for thy uſing it in my Defence, againſt the Injuries of the* Jews; *for, by God's Sentence and Decree, they who take the Sword, to ſhed the Blood of the Innocent, ſhall periſh by the Sword; and this the* Jews *ſhall find, by the tremendous Vengeance, which the Sword of the* Romans *ſhall execute upon them for this Fact.* Which Interpretation is confirmed by what we read in *Rev.* xiii. 10. *He that killeth with the Sword, muſt be killed with the Sword.* Here is the Ground *of the Faith and Patience of the Saints*, viz. that that God, to whom Vengeance belongs, will plead their Cauſe, and recompence Vengeance to their Enemies.

A Legion,

A *Legion*, in the *Roman* Militia, was a Body of Men conſiſting of ſix Thouſand, compoſed each of ten *Cohorts*, as a Cohort was of fifty *Maniples*, and a Maniple of fifteen Men; ſo that twelve Legions would amount to ſeventy-two Thouſand Angels; but in this our Saviour means no more than a great Number.

Who the young Man was, who fled away naked out of the Hands of the Soldiers, who took him for one of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples, has been a Matter of ſome Diſpute among the Ancients. *Epiphanius* and St. *Jerom* are of Opinion, that it was *James* the Brother of our Lord; but, upon our Lord's being apprehended, he, among the reſt, forſook him and fled, and we hear nothing of his Return. St. *Chryſoſtome*, *Ambroſe*, and *Gregory* have a ſtrong Imagination that it was *John*, the beloved Apoſtle; but *John*, we read, was with *Chriſt* in the Garden, cloathed, and cannot therefore eaſily conceive how he came to fly naked. It ſeems moſt probable therefore, that this young Man might be no ways related to our Saviour, but, hearing a Noiſe in the Garden, which might not be far diſtant from the Houſe where he lodged, in the Village of *Gethſemane*, he aroſe and followed the Company in his Night-gown (as we have rendered it) in pure Curioſity to ſee what was the Matter, and that when the Guards were for ſeizing him, he fled away naked, *i. e.* with nothing but his Shirt on, for ſo the Expreſſion may be underſtood.

Here let us reſume our Story.

The Company thus carrying away *Jeſus*, brought him before *Annas*, who was Father-in-Law to *Caiaphas* the High-prieſt, and had formerly born the ſame Office: But *Annas* ſent them to *Caiaphas*, in

in whoſe Palace the *Sanhedrim* was ſtill ſitting, even tho' it was thus late at Night. *Caiaphas* examined him a great deal concerning both his Doctrine and Diſciples; but, when our Saviour anſwered, "That, ſince he had always taught in "the moſt publick Manner, in the Synagogues "and in the Temple, he ſhould rather enquire of "thoſe who had been his conſtant Hearers," an Officer, ſtanding by, gave him a Blow on the Face, pretending that he had not uſed the High-prieſt with Reſpect enough; to which our Lord only replied, *that if he had ſaid any Thing amiſs, the Law was open, and he might implead him, but if not, he had no Cauſe or Authority to ſtrike him.*

The Council perceiving, that, from his own Confeſſion, they could raiſe no Accuſation againſt him, called over the falſe Witneſſes, that they had procured; but theſe, either diſagreed in their Stories, or came not ſufficiently up to the Point. Two Perſons indeed were conſiſtent in what they depoſed, *viz.* that they had heard him ſay, *that he would pull down the Temple of God, and in three Days re-build it.* But, as this Accuſation was falſe in Fact, and founded only upon a figurative Expreſſion of our Saviour's, it was not thought to amount to any thing capital.

All this while our Saviour made no Manner of Reply to the Evidences that were produced againſt him; whereof when the High-prieſt asked the Reaſon, and ſtill he continued ſilent, having one more Queſtion in Reſerve, which, if he anſwered in the *negative*, would (according to his Notion) make him an Impoſtor, and if in the *affirmative*, a Blaſphemer, he ſtood up, and, in the Name *of the living God, adjured him to declare, whether he*

was

was the Meſſiah, *the Son of God, or not.* The Reverence which our Lord paid to that ſacred Name, made him immediately anſwer, and that in direct Terms, *That he was; and that of this they would be convinced, when they ſhould ſee him ſitting on the Right-hand of the Almighty, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Whereupon the High-prieſt, in Teſtimony of his Abhorrence, rent his Clothes, as if he had heard the groſſeſt Blaſphemy, and then adreſſing himſelf to the Council, told them, that there was no Occaſion for any farther Witneſſes, becauſe what the Priſoner ſaid was palpable Blaſphemy, and ſo demanded their Opinion, who unanimouſly agreed, that, according to their Law, he was guilty of Death.

With this Reſolution they repaired to their reſpective Homes (for now it was late) and left our Lord to the Mercy of the Soldiers, and the High-prieſt's Servants, who offered all the Acts of Inſolence and Affrontery that they could invent, to his ſacred Perſon; whilſt ſome ſpit on him, others buffeted him, others blind-folded him, and others again ſmiting him with their Fiſts, called on him to propheſy *who it was that ſtruck him*; with many more Indignities, and abominable Blaſphemies, which muſt have been greater than all Patience, had his Meekneſs and Patience been leſs than infinite.

During this melancholy Scene, *Peter*, whoſe Fears had made him flye from his Maſter in the Garden, having a little recovered his Spirits, and hoping to paſs undiſcovered in the Throng, ventured in, among others, to ſee the Iſſue of ths fatal Night; and by the Intereſt of his Fellow-Diſciple, *John*, (who went with him) was let in by a Maid-ſervant to the High-prieſt's Palace. It

was

was now cold Weather; and the Servants and Officers having kindled a Fire in the Common-hall, *Peter* went in, and ſat down among them to warm himſelf; when the Maid, who let him in, fixing her Eyes upon him, was confident ſhe knew him, and accordingly told the Company, that he was a Diſciple of *Jeſus of Nazareth*, which he poſitively denied to them all, and, as he withdrew into the Porch, heard the Cock crow, but his troubled Thoughts took no notice of it.

While he was in the Porch, another Maid charged him with the ſame Thing, but he denied it again, not only with the ſame Confidence, but with the Solemnity of an Oath; and, about an Hour after, when another inferred from his Dialect, that he muſt neceſſarily be a *Galilean*; and a Relation of the Man, whoſe Ear he had cut off, ſtrongly affirmed, that *he ſaw him in the Garden*; this ſo intimidated him, that with horrid Oaths and Imprecations upon himſelf, he denied the Matter; till the Cock crew the ſecond Time, and our Saviour (who was then in the Hall) turning to *Peter*, gave him ſuch a Glance, as reminded him of his Prediction, and the Foulneſs of his own Crime; whereupon, being ſtung with Compunction, and ſadly oppreſſed with Shame and Grief, he went out, and wept; he wept abundantly, he wept bitterly.

Early next Morning (*Good Friday*) the *Sanhedrim* met again in a full Body, at their Room in the Temple, whither they ordered *Jeſus* to be brought; and, having again enquired of him, whether he was the true *Meſſiah*, and the *Son of God*, and again receiving the ſame Anſwer from him, they adjudged him guilty of Blaſphemy; and, accordingly, having condemned him, carried him to the

Roman

Roman Governor, whose Name, at that Time, was *Pontius Pilate*, desiring of him to ratify their Sentence, and demanded a Warrant for his Execution.

Judas, in the mean Time, watching the Issue of these Proceedings, and finding that his Master was delivered to the secular Power, repented of his Perfidy, and taking the Money, which was the Reward of his Treason, went to the Council, and threw it among them, declaring openly, that he had acted very wickedly *in betraying the innocent Blood*: But, as the People that employ such Instruments, have no Regard to what becomes of them, all the Comfort that he had from them was, that, *since it was his own Act and Deed, it was his Business to look to it, not theirs*; so that being tortured with Agonies of Guilt, and finding no Relief any where, he went, and hanged himself; but in his Death there was something so particular, that it made all the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* take notice of it. The Money however, which he threw among the Council, the Priests thought not proper to put in the Treasury, because it was the *Price of Blood*, and therefore they purchased with it a Spot of Ground, then called the *Potters Field*, (but, afterwards, the *Field of Blood*) for a Place of Interment for Strangers.

Once more let us review what we have advanced in the last Period.

Annas (who by *Josephus* is called *Ananus*) had been High-priest, enjoying that Dignity for eleven Years; and, even after he was deposed, retained still the Title, and had a great Share of the Management of all publick Affairs. When *John the Baptist* entered upon the Exercise of his

Miniſtry, he is called the High-prieſt in Conjunction with *Caiaphas*, *Luke* iii. 2. tho', at that Time, he did not act in this Character, and, when our Saviour was apprehended, he was firſt brought to his Houſe, according to St. *John*, ch. xviii. 14. tho' the other *Evangeliſts* paſs that over in Silence, becauſe there was nothing done to him there; and it looks, as if he had been only detained there, until the Council, met at the Houſe of *Caiaphas*, was ready for him.

Some of the Ancients are of Opinion, that this Officer was *Malchus*, the ſame Perſon, whoſe Ear our Lord had healed in the Garden. The more ungrateful he! And *Selden* pretends, that, in this Act, he did nothing contrary to the Law of his Country, which allowed every *Iſraelite*, by what they call *the Judgment of Zeal*, to avenge, upon the Spot, all publick Injury done to God, or his Temple, to the Nation in general, or the High-prieſt in particular.

From the Defence which our Saviour makes for himſelf, we may learn, that we are not literally to underſtand his Precept *of turning the other Cheek to him that ſmites us*, ſince, inſtead of doing this, we find him endeavouring to vindicate the Innocence of his Words; and from hence we may obſerve likewiſe, that to ſtand upon the Defence of our own Innocency, cannot be contrary to the *Chriſtian* Duties of Patience and Forgiveneſs.

The *Jews* in general, but eſpecially their Judges and Magiſtrates, had a Cuſtom of conjuring by the Name of God, or of exacting an Oath of thoſe, whoſe Crimes did not ſufficiently appear by the Evidence of Witneſſes, or any other Means. The Perſon, thus interrogated, was obliged to ſpeak Truth; and, in all doubtful Caſes, his Confeſſion

or Denial was deciſive, either to acquit or condemn himſelf.

The Rending the Clothes was a Token of Indignation, holy Zeal, and Piety, among the *Jews*, expreſſed on ſeveral Occaſions, eſpecially of Grief, in *Humiliation*; and of Anger, on hearing any blaſphemous Speech. This however was forbidden the High-prieſt, not only as to his ſacerdotal Veſtments, but alſo as to his other Garments, becauſe he was not to appear before God in the Habit of a Mourner; but they, by their Traditions, had ſo qualified that Precept, as to allow him to rend his Clothes at the Bottom, tho' he was not permitted to do it from the Top to the Breaſt.

From the High-prieſt's rending his Clothes, as ſuppoſing *Chriſt* had ſpoke the groſſeſt Blaſphemy, we may obſerve, that the *Jews* of that Age did not think, that the *Meſſiah* was to be *GOD*, but only a *Man*, who could not challenge to himſelf *Divinity*; ſeeing they never concluded our Lord to be a Blaſphemer, becauſe he ſaid he was the *Chriſt*, but only becauſe he ſaid he *was the Son of God*, and thereby made himſelf *equal with God*.

The *Jews* themſelves allow (as Dr. *Lightfoot* informs us) that there might be Froſt and Snow at the Time of the Paſſover; and a common Thing it was for great Dews to fall then, which would make the Air cold, until the Sun had exhaled them.

It is reported of St. *Peter*, that, ever after, when he heard the Cock crow, he wept, remembring the old Inſtrument of his Repentance and Converſion, and his own Unworthineſs, for which he never ceaſed to do Acts of Sorrow and Penance.

The *Galileans* ſpake the ſame Language that the reſt of the *Jews* did; but then they had a

certain uncouth Accent, and Manner of Expreſſion, which diſtinguiſhed them from others, and made them be contemned and ridiculed by the Natives of *Judea.*

Some of the Ancients have taken great Pains to extenuate the horid Oaths and Imprecations of St. *Peter*, with which he denied *Chriſt.* St. *Ambroſe* on *Luke*, and *Hilary* on *Matthew*, both aſſert, that the Apoſtle did not lye, in ſaying, *I know not the Man*, but only diſguiſed the Truth, renouncing *Chriſt* in the Quality of a *Man*, but not as the *Son of God.* But this (according to St. *Jerom*) *is to defend the Servant, by accuſing the Maſter of a Lye*; for if St. *Peter* did not actually deny him, our Lord muſt have falſly affirmed, *thou ſhalt deny me thrice.* The Opinion of thoſe therefore is rather to be embraced, who acknowledge that St. *Peter*, by denying *Chriſt* with his Mouth, committed a mortal Sin, and fell from Grace; and, as it is certain, that, by confirming this Denial with an Oath, and adding horrid Execrations to it, his Sin was highly aggravated, inſtead of accounting (as ſome do) his Denial a Sin of Infirmity, wherein his Heart was true, tho' his Mouth was falſe, we can hardly think, that he could do all this without great Checks of his Conſcience; and that, conſequently, for the preſent, he was in a State of Defection, tho' his bitter Weeping, and quick Repentance, after that *Chriſt* had looked upon him, might make an Attonement for his Tranſgreſſion.

The Aſſembly, which was held the Night before, and wherein our Saviour was declared worthy of Death, was neither *general* nor *judicial*, according to the Senſe of the Law, which did not allow of Juſtice to be adminiſtered in private, or in the Night-

Night-time: And therefore the High-prieſts and Rulers met again in the Morning, in the Council Chamber in the Temple (which they could not do the Night before, becauſe the Temple was then always ſhut) there to re-examine our Saviour, and condemn him in Form.

At *Jeruſalem* the People ſhew you, at this Time, the Palace of *Pilate*, or rather the Place, where they ſay it ſtood, for now an ordinary *Turkiſh* Houſe poſſeſſes its Room. In this pretended Houſe, (which ſtands not far from St. *Stephen*'s Gate, and borders on the *Area* of the Temple, on the *North ſide)* they ſhew you a Room, in which Chriſt was mocked with the Enſigns of Royalty, and buffeted by the Soldiers; and, on the other Side of the Street, (which was anciently another Part of the Palace) is the Room, where they ſay our Lord was ſcourged.

It is not certainly known of what Family, or Country, this Governor *Pontius Pilate* was, tho' it is generally believed that he was of *Rome*, at leaſt of *Italy*. He ſucceeded *Gratus* in the Government of *Judæa*, in which he continued fourteen Years, *i.e.* from the Twelfth, to the Twenty ſecond of *Tiberius*, and is repreſented by *Philo* (*de Legatione ad Caium*) as a Man of an impetuous and obſtinate Temper; and a Judge, who uſed to ſell Juſtice, and for Money pronounce any Sentence, that was deſired. The ſame Author makes mention of his Rapines, his Injuries, his Murthers, the Torment, he inflicted upon the Innocent, and the Perſons, he put to Death without any Form of Proceſs. In ſhort, he deſcribes him as a Man, that exerciſed an exceſſive Cruelty, during the whole Time of his Government, from which

which he was depoſed by *Vitellius*, the Proconſul of *Syria*; arriving at *Rome*, the Emperor *Caligula* baniſhed him to *Vienna* in *Gaul*, where he was reduced to ſuch Extremity, that he killed himſelf with his own Hands. The Evangeliſts call him the *Governor*, (tho', properly ſpeaking, he was no more, than the *Procurator* of *Judæa*) not only becauſe *Governor*, was a Name of general Uſe, but becauſe *Pilate* acted as one, by taking upon him to judge in criminal Matters, as his Predeceſſors had done, and other *Procurators* in the ſmall Provinces of the Empire, where there was no *Proconſul*, conſtantly did.

Such is the Purchaſe of Treaſon, and the Reward of Covetouſneſs. It is cheap in its Offers, momentary in its Poſſeſſion, unſatisfying in its Fruition, uncertain in its Stay, ſudden in its Departure, horrid in the Remembrance, and a Ruin, a certain and miſerable Ruin in the Event.

Tho' the original Words for *he went and hanged himſelf* may perhaps mean no more, then his falling into a violent ſuffocating Fit of Sadneſs and Deſpair, which might ſtop all the natural Paſſages, and ſo, for want of Vent, make him burſt aſunder, and his Guts break out at his Navel; yet to me the moſt natural and obvious Signification of the Word is preferable. The only Difficulty is, how to reconcile his *hanging of himſelf* with what is elſewhere recorded of him, *viz.* that, *falling headlong, he burſt aſunder in the midſt, and all his Bowels guſhed out*, Acts i. 18. But to this Purpoſe the Conjectures of ſeveral have been various. Some think, that he hanged himſelf on a Tree, but that, the Branch yielding, and bending to the Ground, he was not, at that Time, ſtrangled, but afterwards fell into a Dropſy, of which he burſt

and

and died. Others imagine that he threw himſelf from ſome Place, higher than that, on which he intended to hang himſelf, and that, by the Force of the Swing, when he caſt himſelf off, the Rope broke, ſo that he fell to the Ground, and burſt. Others ſuppoſe, that, as he might hang himſelf in ſome private place, he probably there continued, untill his Belly ſwelled, (as it commonly happens to ſuch, as die in that Manner) and, in a ſhort Time, his Bowels burſt out: And for this they have the Authority of ſome Copies, which, inſtead of *falling down headlong*, have, *thus hanging, he burſt a ſunder, and all his Bowels guſhed out.* But, in whatever Manner this came to paſs, I cannot ſee, why, in this extraordinary Inſtance, we may not admit of more than ordinary Providence, to make the Death of this Traitor more remarkable.

It was a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, which was afterwards imitated by the firſt *Chriſtians*, that it ſhould not be lawful for Executioners to offer any Thing, or for any Alms to be received of them; and ſo, by Analogy, any Money with which a Life was bought, was not to be put into the Treaſury.

The Valley of *Jehoſhaphat* runs croſs the Mouth of another Valley, called the Valley of *Hinnon*, lying at the Bottom of Mount *Sion*. On the Weſt-ſide of this Valley is the Place called *the Potters Field*, where, not improbably, the People of that Trade were uſed to dry their Pots, before they baked them. It was afterwards called *the Field of Blood*, for the Reaſon that the *Evangeliſt* aſſigns; but at preſent, from that Veneration which it has obtained among *Chriſtians*, it is named *Campo Sancto*, or the *Holy Field*. It is a ſmall

Plat

Plat of Ground, not above thirty Yards long, and about half as much broad; and one Moiety of it is taken up by a ſquare Fabrick, about twelve Yards high, built for a Charnel-houſe, and covered over with a Vault, in which are ſome Openings, to let down the Bodies that are to be buried there. The Earth muſt certainly be impregnated with a very corroſive Salt, if what ſome tell us be true, *viz.* that it can diſſolve a Body in the Space of twenty-four Hours. Thoſe however, who have looked down through the Openings, tell us, that they could ſee many Bodies under ſeveral Degrees of Decay, from whence they conjectured, that this Grave does not make ſuch quick Diſpatch with the Corps committed to it, as is commonly reported. The *Armenians* have the Command of this Burying-place, for which they pay to the *Turks* a Rent of a *Zequin* a-Day; and, a little below the *Campo Sancto*, is ſhewn an intricate Cave, or a Sepulchre, conſiſting of ſeveral Rooms, one within another, in which the Apoſtles are ſaid to have hid themſelves, when they forſook their Maſter and fled.

The Strangers, for whom the *Potters Field* was deſigned a Burying-place, may be either Men of other Nations, with whom the *Jews* would have no Commerce, even when they were dead, and therefore provided a ſeparate Burying-place for them; or they might be *Jews*, who, coming from far to *Jeruſalem* to ſacrifice, died there, before their Return Home, and ſo the Prieſts provided a Burying-place for them.

Let us now proceed in our Relation.

When the Members of the *Sanhedrim* came to the Governor's Palace, they refuſed to go into the *Judgment-*

S^t. JAMES *the Great was the Son of* Zebedee. *and the Brother of* John, *he was called* Boanerge *by our Saviour, and was Slain by* Herod.

Judgment-hall, for fear of contracting ſome Pollution, and therefore *Pilate* went out to them; and as he underſtood that they had already paſſed Sentence upon him, he demanded the Grounds of their Accuſation againſt him: But, being unwilling that any Enquiry ſhould be made into the Particulars of their Proceedings, they anſwered in general, that, *if he were not a Criminal, they would not have brought him to him.* Imagining therefore that the Proſecution was about ſome Matters relating to their *Religion*, the Governor deſired, they would take him, and judge him according to their own *Law*; but to this they replied, *that it was not permitted them to put any Man to Death.*

By theſe reſerved Anſwers, *Pilate* perceiving that their Intention was to make him the Inſtrument of their Malice againſt an innocent Man, refuſed to intermeddle in the Affair, unleſs they would exhibit ſome Articles of Accuſation againſt him. Knowing therefore that *Herod* was a Creature of the *Roman* Court, and a Slave to its Greatneſs, they alledged againſt our Lord, That he was guilty of ſeditious Practices, of diſſuading the Payment of the Tribute to *Cæſar*, and of ſetting himſelf up for a King. *Pilate* hearing the Name of a King, thought himſelf concerned to examine that Point; and therefore, returning to the Judgment-hall, and ſeating himſelf upon the Tribunal, he asked *Jeſus*, whether *he was the King of the Jews?* which our Lord never pretended to deny; but then he informed the Governor, that *his Kingdom was not of this World*, and could therefore give no Umbrage to the *Romans*; for that, had it been a worldly Kingdom, his Subjects and Followers would certainly have fought for him, and

ſaved him from the Hands of the *Jews*. When *Pilate* heard that he diſclaimed all Right to ſecular Kingdoms, he thought he had nothing to do to examine him about the Nature of his ſpiritual Empire; and therefore, withdrawing from the Court into the *Veſtibulum*, (where his Accuſers were impatiently expecting the Ratification of their Sentence, in order to Execution) contrary to their Hopes, he plainly told them, that he found *nothing worthy of Death in him.*

Upon this Diſappointment the Chief-prieſts and Elders grew exceedingly fierce and clamorous, repreſenting our Lord as a turbulent Mover of the People, and charging him with the ſpreading of ſeditious Principles, through all *Galilee* and *Judea*, even as far as *Jeruſalem*. *Pilate* hearing them name *Galilee*, and underſtanding that he was a *Galilean*, and, conſequently belong'd to *Herod*'s Juriſdiction; in order to get rid of the Importunity of the *Jews*, and withal to free himſelf from this odd and puzzling Affair, he ſent him immediately to *Herod*, who was then at *Jeruſalem* upon the Occaſion of the Feaſt. *Herod* was no leſs proud of the Honour done him by *Pilate*, than glad of this Opportunity to gratify his Curioſity. For, having heard much of our Saviour's Fame, he expected to ſee ſome Miracle or other done by him, but found himſelf ſadly diſappointed. For, tho' the Scribes and Rulers purſued him with their Accuſations to *Herod*'s Palace, and *Herod*, in hearing the Cauſe, asked him ſeveral Queſtions, yet he would not vouchſafe ſo much as one Anſwer; which made the *Tetrarch* look upon him as an inſignificant, deſpicable Perſon; and, accordingly, having committed him to the Deriſions and Inſults of his Guards, who uſed him in the utmoſt

Indignity, he ſent him back again to *Pilate*, arrayed in a white Robe; whether it was to make a mock of him, or to indicate his Innocence, or both; but ſo it was, that, from that Time, *Herod* and *Pilate* (who before were at great Variance) were, upon this Occaſion, perfectly reconciled.

When our Lord was remanded back in this Manner, *Pilate* addreſſed himſelf to the Prieſts and Rulers of the People, telling them, "That, tho' they had brought this Man before him, as a ſeditious Perſon, and a Seducer of the People, yet, upon Examination, he could not find him guilty of any of the Crimes, that were laid to his Charge; that this was not his own Opinion only, but that *Herod* (who was a more competent Judge of the Affair, and to whom he had ſent him, on purpoſe to take Cognizance of it) had no ways ſignified that his Crimes were capital; and therefore, inſtead of taking away his Life, he propoſed ſome leſſer Puniſhment, if they thought fit, ſuch as ſcourging him a little with Whips, and ſo diſmiſſing him." But this Lenity was ſo diſagreeable to their enraged Temper, that they peremptorily demanded Execution, ſaying, *Crucify him, crucify him.* *Pilate*, ſtill tender of ſhedding innocent Blood, expoſtulated the Matter with them, deſiring to know what *Evil he had done*, for, as for his Part, he could find no Fault in him, much leſs any Crimes deſerving of Death; but this did but the more exaſperate, and made them more clamorous for ſpeedy Execution.

The Governor had one Expedient more, which he thought would not fail him. Every Paſſover he was obliged by a certain Cuſtom, to par-

don one Criminal, whom the *Jews* ſhould nominate, and therefore when the People came, and were urgent with him to grant them that uſual Favour, he propoſed two Perſons to them, *Barabbas*, a notorious Malefactor, who, in an Inſurrection with ſome other *ſeditious* Perſons had committed Murther, and *Jeſus*, who was called *Chriſt*, never doubting, but that the Populace, who, he knew, were better inclined to our Lord, than their Rulers, would have preferred an innocent Man, before a Thief and a Mutherer; but, at the Inſtigation of their Prieſts, and others, they required, that the Favour might be granted to *Barabbas*. Hereupon, when the *Governor* deſired to know, what he was to do with the Perſon, whom they called *Chriſt*, they, one and all, cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him*; and, as he ſtill inſiſted on his Innocence, and propoſed ſome *lighter* Puniſhment (which was all, to be ſure, that he could deſerve) they began to redouble their Clamours, and, in the moſt tumultuous Manner imaginable, demanded that he might be *crucified*.

The *Governor*, in the mean Time, received a Meſſage from his Wife, deſiring him, by no means, to condemn the innocent Perſon, that was then before him, becauſe, upon his Account, ſhe had had that Night many frightful and uneaſy Dreams, which made him the more earneſt to releaſe him, or at leaſt to ſpare his Life; and therefore, in hopes of pacifying the People's Rage, he ordered him to be ſcourged. The Soldiers, who were to do this, thinking it not enough to execute their Orders, took him into the Common-hall, where, ſtripping him of his own Cloaths, they put a looſe purple Coat about him, for a Robe; a Wreath

a Wreath of Thorns upon his Head, for a Crown; and a Reed in his Hand, for a Sceptre; and then; in Deriſion, ſaluted him, and, bowing their Knees, mocked him with the ſham Profeſſion of of Allegiance. After this they ſpit in his Face, ſmote him on the Cheek, and (to make his Crown of Thorns pierce the deeper) ſtruck him on the Head with his phantaſtick Sceptre; and then leading him to a Pillar (where they tied him faſt) they ſcourged him with Whips, and with ſuch unrelenting Cruelty, that his tender Fleſh was torn in Pieces, and the Pavement crimſoned with his precious Blood.

In this piteous Plight, with his Head, Face, and Body imbrued in Blood, and with his mock Ornaments on, *Pilate*, in Hopes of moving the People's Compaſſion, ordered him to be brought forth, and when he appeared, *See the Man*, ſays he, *this rueful Spectacle of ſuffering Innocence!* But ſo far were they from melting at the Sight of ſo deplorable an Object, that they raiſed their Cries ſtill louder and louder for his Crucifixion; and when the Governor ſtill inſiſted on his Innocence, *we have a Law*, ſaid they, *and by our Law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God.*

Theſe laſt Words raiſed ſome Terror in *Pilate*, and gave him more Uneaſineſs: For, taking them in ſuch a Senſe as an *Heathen* might well put upon them, he began to apprehend, that, if he ſhould proceed to Sentence againſt him, he might deſtroy not only an innocent Perſon, but poſſibly ſome Hero, or mighty Demi-god, and ſo at once commit an Act of Injuſtice and Impiety both. He therefore, returning with *Jeſus* to the Judgment-

Seat

Seat again, began to enquire into his Original and Pedigree: But, as it was no Part of our Saviour's Intention to eſcape Death, he thought it not proper to ſay any Thing in his own Juſtification; until, his Silence having given the Governor ſome Offence (inſomuch that he put him in mind, that his Life or Death, his Releaſe or Crucifixion, depended on him) he then replied, that ſuch Power he could not have over him, *were it not permitted him from above, and that therefore they, who had delivered him up, had the greater Sin to anſwer for, than he.*

This Anſwer made *Pilate* ſtill the more deſirous to releaſe him; which when the *Jews* perceived, they found out at laſt this Expedient, to work upon his Fears, by telling him plainly, *that, if he did not puniſh a Man who ſet himſelf up for a King, he was an Enemy to the Emperor*; a Menace which he, who knew the jealous Temper of his Maſter *Tiberius* full well, and how eaſily a wrong Repreſentation of theſe Proceedings might prove his Ruin, had not the Courage to withſtand: And therefore, returning to the Hall, he ordered *Jeſus* to be brought, in the ſame Habit, to his publick Tribunal, which ſtood in a paved Place, called *Gabatha*, and, before he gave Sentence, calling for Water, and waſhing his Hands before all the People, he ſolemnly declared, that he was *innocent of the Blood of that juſt Man*, and *that they muſt anſwer for it*; whereupon the whole Body of the People cried out, *May his Blood fall upon us and our Poſterity.* An Imprecation as black as Hell, and which has been too long (may it pleaſe the Almighty to ſhorten their Puniſhment!) verified upon them.

Here,

Here, as uſual, we ſhall illuſtrate what has been advanced.

The *Sanhedrim* refuſed to go into the Judgment-hall, becauſe in the Governor's Palace there was a Guard of *Roman* Soldiers, and a great Company of Servants; and, as they were Heathens, they thought that, by touching any of them, they ſhould be defiled, and, conſequently made incapable of eating the *Paſſover*, of which no unclean Perſon was to partake. By the *Paſſover* however, here in *John.* Chap. xviii. 28. we are not to underſtand the *Paſchal-Lamb*, which the reſt of the *Jews*, as well as our Saviour, had eaten the Night before, but the *Chagigah*, or Peace-Offering, *i. e.* the Sheep and Oxen, that were offered all the ſeven Days of the Feaſt, and are expreſly called the *Paſſover*, Luke xxii. 1. Thus the *Jewiſh* Doctors remark upon Deut. xvi. 2. *Thou ſhall ſacrifice the* Paſſover *to the Lord, of the Flock, and of the Herd*, that the *Flock* ſignifies the *Lambs*, which were eaten on the 14th and the *Herd*, the Offerings of the *Chagigah*, which were conſumed on the 15th Day of the Month *Niſan.* The *Jewiſh* Rulers therefore would not go into Judgment-hall, that they might not be unfit to eat the *Paſſover*, *i. e.* thoſe *Paſchal* Offerings of the *Herd*, which were holy Things, and of which none might eat in their Defilement.

By the Anſwer of the *Sanhedrim*, *if he were not a Criminal, they would not have brought him to him*, they ſeem willing to make *Pilate*, not ſo much a Judge of the Cauſe, as an Executioner of their Sentence: But there cannot poſſibly be an higher Act of Injuſtice, than to deſire, that a Judge ſhould ſuppoſe the accuſed Perſon guilty of the Crime, without

without any farther Examination. It is no ſtrange and extrordinary Thing, to ſee innocent Perſons oppreſſed by arbitrary Proceedings, without any legal Proceſs; but for a Man to be brought before a Judge, in order to be delivered up directly to Execution, without any Proof of his Crime, or any Examination concerning it, is a new Way of Oppreſſion, firſt invented and contrived againſt the Saviour of the World.

Whether the *Jews* had, at this Time, the *Power of Life and Death*, is a Point, much controverted among the Learned. The Anſwer, which the *Jewiſh* Rulers here give to *Pilate*, and the general Opinion of their *Rabbins*, who ſuppoſe, that their Rulers loſt that Power about forty Years before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, ſeem to incline to the Negative, but thoſe, who take the other ſide of the Queſtion, argue thus,——That the *Jews*, when reduced to a *Roman* Province, had ſtill the Privilege granted them, *to uſe the ſacred Inſtitutions and Cuſtoms, that were derived to them from their Fathers*; Joſeph Antiq. l. c 17. that it was granted to *Hyrcanus*, the High-Prieſt, that, if any Controverſy ſhould ariſe concerning their Diſcipline, that the Judgment of it ſhould be referred to him; that, purſuant to this Grant, we find the High-Prieſt, and his Council ſtoning *Stephen*, not by the Rage of Zealots (as ſome conceive) but according to the Law, which requires that the Blaſphemer ſhould be ſtoned, *Lev.* xxiv. 16. that *Saul*, armed with the Power of the High prieſt and Elders, perſecuted the *Jewiſh* Chriſtians unto Death, and led them bound to *Jeruſalem* to be puniſhed, *Acts* xxiii. 4, 5. that the *Jews* would have judged *Paul after their own Law*, *Acts* xxiv. 6. and have put him

him to Death, *Acts* xxiii. 37. had not *Lyſias*, the chief Captain, reſcued him from their Hands, which they ſay he did by Violence, *i. e.* by an Invaſion of their Rights, but he, becauſe he underſtood that *Paul* was a *Roman*; and from thence they conclude, that they ſtill retained the Power of judging, and condemning thoſe to Death, who were *Jews* by Nature and Deſcent, and by their Laws diſerved to die, tho', as to ſome Perſons, and in ſome Caſes, they had not that Power. Thus when *Annas*, or *Ananus* the High-Prieſt, killed *James*, the Brother of our Lord, and *ſtoned many other Chriſtians, as Tranſgreſſors of the Law*, the wiſeſt Part of the Nation (ſays *Joſephus*) diſliked his Proceedings, becauſe he ſhould not have called a Council concerning Life and Death, without a Licence from *Albinus*, the *Roman* Preſident. From whence we may infer, that the Power of inflicting capital Puniſhment, even upon the *Jews*, converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith, was then ſo far taken from them, that they could not regularly do it, without firſt obtaining Leave from the *Roman* Governour; and, in the Caſe of our bleſſed Saviour, the *Jews* had debarred themſelves from the Power of putting him to death, after they had accuſed him before *Pilate*, not of Crimes committed againſt their Law, but of Sedition, and aſpiring at a Kingdom, to the Prejudice of *Cæſar* and the *Roman* Government, whereof it belonged to *Pilate*, and not to them to judge and determine. And therefore their ſaying to him. *It is not lawful for us to put any Man to Death*, John xviii. 31. is looked upon, either as a kind of Complaint of the Encroachments, which the *Romans* had made upon their civil Conſtitution, or as a mere Pretence, ſince *Pilate* gave them Power enough, when he

bad them *take him, and judge him according to their Law*; and that the true Reaſons of their bringing him before the *Roman* Tribunal, were, that he might be condemned for Sedition, which would be a means to ſecure them from the Rage of the People, and that he might be crucified, which was a *Roman* Death, and generlly inflicted on thoſe, that were found tampering againſt the Government.

When our Lord's Accuſers came before *Pilate*, they ſaid nothing of his pretended Blaſphemy, his Deſtruction of the Temple, or Violation of the Law of *Moſes*, becauſe they were Queſtions, that the Governour, they knew, would not concern himſelf with; and therefore they forged ſuch Accuſations againſt him, as they thought might make him odious and ſuſpected to the *Roman* Government, and oblige *Pilate* to be ſevere againſt him,

By *Chriſt*'s Anſwer *that his Kingdom was not of this World* he means, that it was not of human Original, but from Heaven, and ſo meddled not with the Affairs of this World; that it had none of the Pomp and Splendor of the World annexed to it; none to fight for it with carnal Weapons, and exerciſed no Dominion over Men's Bodies, but over their Souls only; that its Government was ſpiritual, and its Judicatories the Courts of *Conſcience*; its Tribute a Conformity to the great Laws of Faith, Hope, and Charity; and its only Impoſts, the Duties of an holy Spirit, and the Expreſſions of a religious Worſhip, a reſigned Will, and a conſenting Underſtanding, in which *Pilate* ſoon perceived that the Intereſt of *Cæſar* could not be invaded.

They artfully make mention of *Galilee*, to incite *Pilate* againſt him, as a ſeditious Perſon, and to confirm their own Suggeſtion, that he was ſo; for they give him to think, that, as he was a *Galilean*, he might probably embrace the Opinion of *Judas Gaulonites*, who had held it not lawful to pay Tribute to *Cæſar*; a Notion, which the Inhabitants of *Galilee* had generally imbibed, and, upon that Account, were always prone to Sedition and Rebellion; for which ſome of them, not long before, had been ſet upon, and ſlain by *Pilate*.

Pilate's Government did not extend to *Galilee*; it included *Judæh* only. *Herod Antipas*, the Son of *Herod the Great*, was, at this Time, King, or *Tetrach* of *Galilee*, *Jeſus*, conſequently, was his Subject; and therefore, according to the *Roman* Laws, it was *Pilate*'s Duty to ſend him to his proper Sovereign, eſpecially as he was accuſed of Rebellion, and a Deſign to make himſelf a King.

The Words mean properly a *ſplendid Robe*, and do not relate ſo much to the *Colour*, as the *Richneſs* of the Habit.

It is generally thought, that the Cauſe of the Difference between *Herod* and *Pilate* was the Maſſacre, that *Pilate* made of ſome *Galileans*, at *Jeruſalem*, in the time of the *Paſſover*, *Luke* xiii, 1. which *Herod* reſented, as an Indignity put upon him, and on Invaſion of his Authority, who was at that Time *Tetrarch* of *Galilee*.

The Chaſtiſement (which *Pilate* adviſed by Scourging,) was not in order to his Crucifixion, and therefore was not that Puniſhment, which the *Romans* uſed to inflict upon Malefactors as preparative to their Execution, for *Pilate* intended it as a Means to procure his Releaſe; and therefore he

ſeemed willing to conſent to it as a Puniſhment, which the *Jews* ſo commonly inflicted upon thoſe, who had acted perverſly againſt their Law, and their Traditions, that he migh exempt him from that Sentence, which they were ſo urgent with him to pronounce. But the Reſult of this his Compliance was, that he neither ſaved our Lord, nor preſerved Juſtice. Inſtead of one Puniſhment, the Innocent was made to ſuffer two, being at laſt both ſcourged, and crucified.

As the Feaſt of the *Paſſover* was celebrated by the *Jews* in Memory of their Deliverance from *Egyptian* Bondage, it was very agreeable to the Nature of that Feaſt, and therefore cuſtomary at that Time (tho' practiſed on no other Fiſtivals) to make this Releaſe. It is obſerved however, that this Practice was no Cuſtom of the *Jews*, even when they had the Civil Adminiſtration in their Hands, but a Piece of Popularity, or Favour of the Procurator, firſt brought in by *Pilate*, and afterwards continued by ſome *Chriſtian* Emperors, who, by a general Law, commanded the Judges, that, on the firſt Day of the *Paſſover*, all *Jewiſh* Priſoners, but ſuch as were committed for particular Crimes, ſhould be diſcharged.

From the Time of *Tiberius*, the Governours of Provinces were allowed to take their Wives along with them, which was a Privilege not granted them before. This Wife of *Pilate*'s, according to the general Tradition, was named *Claudia Proſcula*; and, in Relation to her Dream, ſome are of Opinion, that, as ſhe had Intelligence of our Lord's Apprehenſion, and knew, by his Character, that he was a righteous Perſon, her Imagination, being ſtruck with theſe Ideas, did naturally produce the Dream

Dream we read of. But, as out Saviour was apprehended about Midnight, out of the City, and without *Pilate*'s Privity, and detained in the Houſe of *Annas*, untiil it was Day, there was no Poſſibility for her having any Notice of it; therefore we have the juſter Reaſon to believe, that this Dream was ſent providentially unto her, for the clearer Manifeſtation of our Lord's Innocence

When the *Jews* perceived that *Pilate* looked upon the Accuſations, which they brought againſt *Jeſus*, of his being a ſeditious Perſon, and one who aimed at a Kingdom, as idle Suggeſtions, and which had no ſhadow of Probability in them, they had Recourſe to another Allegation, *viz.* his being a Violator of the Laws of their Nations, and guilty of Blaſphemy; which (as they were allowed to be governed by their own Law) they had a Right to demand of their Governor to ſee puniſhed, and, accordingly, did it with Arrogance enough.

Pilate indeed ſinned heniouſly, in abuſing his Power, to the Condemnation of the Innocent; but *Judas* ſinned more, in delivering him up the Chief-prieſts, and the Chief-prieſts in delivering him up to *Pilate*, than *Pilate* himſelf, whom they made a Tool to ſerve their Malice and Revenge. They had better Means of Knowledge than he, and ſo ſinned againſt more Light, and conſequently, their Guilt was greater, and their Condemnation heavier, than his.

The Word *Gabatha* in the *Syriac* (for that is the Language which was then commonly ſpoken, and which the Writers of the *New Teſtament* do therefore call the *Hebrew*) ſignifies an *Elevation*; and therefore the Place, where *Pilate* had his Tribunal

bunal erected, was probably a Terraſs, a Gallery, or Balcony belonging to his Palace, and paved with Stone or Marble, as the *Greek* Word *Lithoſtrotos* imports.

Waſhing of Hands,, with a Deſign to denote *Innocency*, was not peculiar only to the *Jews*, but cuſtomary among other Nations; becauſe by the Element of Water 'tis natural to ſignify Purity and Cleanneſs; but then the Queſtion is, Whether, in Conformity to the *Jews* or *Gentiles*, it was, that *Pilate* made uſe of this Ceremony? To expiate an unknown Murder, the Elders of the next adjacent City were wont to waſh their Hands, and ſay, *Our Hands have not ſhed this Blood*, Deut. xxi. 6, 7. and the *Pſalmiſt*, having renounced all Confederacy with wicked and miſchievous Men, makes this Reſolution, *I will waſh my Hands*, in Teſtimony of *my Innocency*, Pſal. xxvi. 6. From which Paſſages *Origen* is of Opinion, that *Pilate* did this in Compliance with the Manners of the *Jews*; that by *Actions*, as well as Words, he might declare to them the Opinion he had of our Lord's Innocence. But, as *Pilate* was a *Roman*, others are rather inclined to think, that, in this Action, he conformed himſelf to the Manners of the *Gentiles*. The *Scholiaſt* upon *Sophocles* (in *Ajace*) informs us, that it was the Cuſtom among the Ancients, when they had killed a Man, or ſhed Blood, to waſh their Hands in Water, thereby to purify them from from their Defilements. Nay, *Clemens Romanus* informs us, (l. ii. c. 52.) that, when Judges were going to pronounce Sentence of Death, they uſually lift up their Hands to Heaven, thereby to denote their own Innocency; and 'tis not improbable, that they waſhed their Hands before

fore they did ſo, that they might lift them up with the more Purity.

But, to proceed. *Barabbas* being thus releaſed, and *Jeſus* condemned to the Croſs, the Soldiers and Officers, after they had acted over again their former Inſults, and Indignities, took off the purple Coat, and put his own Garments on him, and having laid an heavy Croſs upon his Shoulders, led him away to his Crucifixion: But when they came to the Gate of the City, his Strength was ſo intirely exhauſted, that he was not able to ſtand under it any longer, and therefore they compelled one *Simon, a Cyrenian*, the Father of *Alexander* and *Rufus*, to bear it the reſt of the Way.

Among the vaſt Throngs, that followed to this Execution, there were many People (eſpecially ſome pious Women) who could not behold this ſad Spectacle, without the higheſt Grief and Lamentation; which, when our *Saviour* obſerved, lifting up his Face, all bloody, and disfigured, "*Weep not for me*, ſaid he, *but weep for your-*
"*ſelves, and your Children*; for it will not be long,
"before thoſe ſhall he accounted happy, who
"ſhall have no Poſterity to inherit the Miſeries,
"that ſhall then come upon this Nation: For
"how diſmal muſt their Condition be who ſhall
"call on the *Hills to cover them*, and *the Moun-*
"*tains to fall on them*, that, by a ſudden Deſtruc-
"tion they may eſcape the lingring Calamities of
"Famine, and Fear, and the Horror of a Thou-
"ſand Deaths!"

When he came to the Place of Execution, which was called *Golgotha*, or Mount *Calvary*, the Soldiers, before they nailed him to the Croſs, offer-

ed

ed him a Potion of Wine mixed with Gall, which, when he had taſted it, he refuſed to drink. They then ſtripped off his Cloaths; and having, with four great Nails, faſtened his Hands and his Feet, with his Body ſtretched out, to the Croſs; they ſo raiſed it up, and fixed it in the Ground. To obſcure his Innocence, and put him to the greater Shame, they crucified him between two common Malefactors; but what might be ſome Compenſation for that, was the Inſcription which *Pilate* ordered to be fixed on the Top of his Croſs, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS, in the three moſt general Languages, *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, which the High-prieſts would gladly have had him alter: But, either out of Spite to them, who had forced him upon an unjuſt Act, or out of Honour to our Lord, whom he knew to be a righteous Perſon, he poſitively refuſed to do it.

Aſſoon as our Lord was fixed on the Croſs (which was much about Noon) the four Soldiers, who were his Executioners, went to dividing the poor Spoil of his Garments. His Mantle they cut into four Parts, and took each of them one; but as for his Coat, becauſe it was one intire Piece, wove without Seam, and would therefore be ſpoiled if it were divided, for it they caſt Lots, and therein fulfilled a famous Prophecy.

While he thus hung upon the Croſs in the moſt exquiſite Torments, ſeveral People of different Denominations, the Chief-prieſts, Rulers, and Soldiers, moſt of the Multitude, and almoſt every common Paſſenger, inſulted his Miſery; preſuming, that a Perſon, reduced to that low Eſtate, could never be the promiſed *Meſſiah*: But all the Reply

S^t. JAMES *the Less was the Brother of our Lord, and Penman of the Epistle under his Name.*

R. Sheppard Sculp.

Reply that he made to their bitter and reviling Speeches, was only by way of Petition to his heavenly Father, that, in reſpect of their Ignorance, and confirmed Prejudice againſt him, he would be pleaſed to overlook their barbarous Treatment of him, and to pardon their provoking Blaſphemies.

Nay, of the two Malefactors who were crucified with him, one of them reviled and mocked him in the ſame groſs Manner, requiring him to give the Company (as they deſired) a Demonſtration of his being the true *Meſſiah*, by reſcuing both himſelf and them from the Croſſes whereon they were fixed: But the other Malefactor reproved his Companion for inſulting the Innocent, and, while himſelf was receiving the juſt Reward of his Crimes, upbraiding a Perſon who ſuffered undeſervedly; and then looking upon *Jeſus*, with a noble Reliance, and moſt wonderful Faith, he humbly intreated him to retain ſome Remembrance of him when he came into his Kingdom; to which our Lord returned him this moſt gracious Promiſe of ſpeedy Felicity, *To Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.*

In the mean Time, there ſtood by our Saviour's Croſs, ſad Spectators of this diſmal Tragedy, the holy *Virgin Mother*, *Mary* the Wife of *Alphæus*, *Mary Magdalene*, and *John* his beloved Apoſtle; to whoſe Care and Protection he recommended his ſorrowful Mother, and, from that Time forward, he took her to his Houſe, and, all along, paid her the Reſpect due to a Parent.

A few explanatory Notes may be here neceſſary to illuſtrate the foregoing Paſſages.

It was the Cuſtom, that he who was to be crucified ſhould bear his own Croſs to the Place of

Execution: But, whereas it is generally ſuppoſed, that our Lord bore the whole Croſs, *i. e.* the long and tranſverſe Part both, this ſeems to be a Thing impoſſible; and therefore *Lipſius*, in his Treatiſe (*de Supplicio Crucis*) has ſet his matter in a true Light, when he tells us, that *Jeſus* only carried the tranſverſe Beam, becauſe the long Piece of Timber, or Body of the Croſs, was either fixed in the Ground before, or made ready to be ſet up, as ſoon as the Priſoner came; and from hence he obſerved, that Painters are very much miſtaken in their Deſcription of our Saviour carrying the whole Croſs.

Crucifixion was a Death, the moſt dreadful of all others, both for the Shame, and the Pain of it. So ſcandalous, that it was inflicted, as the laſt Mark of Deteſtation, upon the vileſt of People. It was the Puniſhment of Robbers, and Murtherers, provided that they were *Slaves* too; but otherwiſe, if they were *free*, and had the Privileges of the City of *Rome*, this was then thought a Proſtitution of that Honour, and too infamous a Puniſhment for ſuch an one, let his Crimes have been what they would. The *Form* of a Croſs was that of two Poſts, cutting one and other at right Angles. On that which ſtood upright, the Body was faſtened, by nailing the Feet to it, and on the other tranſverſe Piece, by nailing the Hands on each Side. Now becauſe theſe Parts of the Body, being the Inſtruments of Action and Motion, are provided by Nature with a much greater Quantity of Nerves than others have Occaſion for, and becauſe all Senſation is performed by the Spirits contained in theſe Nerves, it will follow, that wherever they abound, the Senſe of Pain, muſt needs, in Proportion, be more quick and tender. But tho' the

Pain

Pain of this kind of Death was exceedingly ſharp, yet, as none of the Vitals were immediately affected, the Body continued, thus ſtretched out, and hanging upon the Nails, that faſtened it to the Croſs, until Exceſs of Anguiſh had, by Degrees, quite exhauſted the Spirits, and driven out the Soul, which muſt needs make the Death, which our Saviour ſubmitted to for our Sakes, ſlow and lingering, as well as painful and ignominious: So lingering, that St. *Andrew* was two whole Days upon the Croſs, and ſome other Martyrs have been rather ſtarved, and devoured by Birds, than killed with the Torments of the Tree.

Libya, in its proper Acceptation, denotes thoſe Parts of the *African* Continent, which lie about the *Mediterranean* Sea, from *Egypt Eaſtward*, to the greater *Syrtis*, or *Gulph of Sidra*, *Weſtward*. In the *Weſtern* Part of this *Libya* ſtood *Cyrene*, a City of great Note, and once of ſuch power, as to contend with *Carthage* for Pre-eminence: But whether this *Simon*, whom the Soldiers compelled to carry our Saviour's Croſs, was a *Jew* or *Pagan*, is a Queſtion that has been diſputed among the Ancients. Several Fathers have thought that he was a *Gentile*, and that herein he was a Type of that idolatrous People, who were afterwards to be called to the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, and to carry the Croſs after *Chriſt*. But others, from his Name, rather imagine that he was a *Jew*, and that, as there were great Numbers of that Nation in *Egypt*, and the Neighbouring Countries, this *Simon* might be one, whoſe Habitation was at *Cyrene* in *Libya*, but was now come up to *Jeruſalem*, at the Time of the Paſſover. He is called by St. *Mark*, chap. xv. 21. the Father of *Alexander*

der and *Rufus*, becauſe theſe two Perſons were become famous in the *Chriſtian* Church, at the Time when this Apoſtle wrote his Goſpel; but whether he himſelf was, at this Time, a Diſciple of *Chriſt*, and afterwards Biſhop of *Boſtra* in *Arabia*, where he ſuffered Martyrdom, by being burnt alive by the *Pagans*, is much to be queſtioned, tho' ſome have aſſerted it; but not, I fear, from ſufficient Authority.

The Saying of our Saviour to the Women, who lamented him as he went to Crucifixion, *Weep not for me, but for your ſelves, and your Children*, they undoubtedly had occaſion to think of at the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, and during the War againſt the *Romans*, not only on Account of the Loſs of their Children, and the Sale of them who were under ſeventeen for Bond-ſlaves; but chiefly on the Account of that Famine in *Jeruſalem*, which forced *Mary*, the Daughter of *Eleazar*, a Woman of ſome Figure and Quality, to eat her own ſucking Child: Upon which (ſays *Joſephus*) *the Dread of Famine made Men weary of their Lives, and the Living envied the Dead that were taken away before the Extremity came to this Height.*

That the Words, *they ſhall call on the Hills to cover them, and the Mountains to fall on them*, is a proverbial Expreſſion, which the Prophet *Hoſea*, chap. x. 8. makes uſe of, to denote the utter Deſpair of a People, when they ſee unavoidable Calamities coming upon them, cannot be doubted; for ſo the *Targum* upon *Hoſea* explains it, "He "will bring ſuch Judgments upon them, as will "render their Condition as miſerable, as if the "Mountains ſhould cover them, and the Hills "fall upon them." *Iſaiah* ſpeaks of the Wicked, that

that *they ſhould go into the Holes of the Rocks, and into the Caves of the Earth, for Fear of the Lord*, chap. ii. 19. And, accordingly, *Joſephus* relates of the *Jews*, that, after the taking of *Jeruſalem*, many of them hid themſelves in Vaults, and Sepulchres, and there periſhed, rather than ſurrender to the *Romans*.

Golgotha in the *Syriac* (vulgarly called the *Hebrew* Tongue) ſignifies the ſame that *Calvary* does in *Latin*, and was ſo called, either becauſe the Form of the Mount did ſomewhat reſemble a Man's Skull, or rather, becauſe it being the common Place of Execution, a great Number of dead Mens Skulls were uſually ſeen there. It is a ſmall Eminency, or Hill upon the greater Mount of *Moriah*; and, as it was anciently appropriated to the Execution of Malefactors, it was therefore ſhut out of the Walls of the City, as an execrable and polluted Place; but, ſince it was made the Altar, on which was offered up the precious and all-ſufficient Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World, it has recovered itſelf from that Infamy; and has always been reverenced, and reſorted to, by *Chriſtians*, with ſuch Devotion, as has drawn the City round about it, ſo that it now ſtands in the midſt of *Jeruſalem*, and a great Part of the Hill of *Sion* is ſhut out of the Walls, to make Room for the Admiſſion of Mount *Calvary*; and this the rather, becauſe it was a Tradition generally received by the primitive *Chriſtians*, that the *firſt*, as well as the *ſecond Adam*, was buried here; and that this was the Place where *Abraham* was about to have offered his Son *Iſaac*, the Type of our bleſſed Lord.

Interpreters, and others, vary very much about the

the Paſſage concerning the offering our Lord Wine mixed with Gall, taking it two different Ways, as St *Matthew*, chap. xxvii. 34. and St. *Mark*, chap. xv. 23. ſeem to expreſs it. Some will have it, that, in St. *Matthew*'s Senſe, *Vinegar mingled with Gall*, was a bitter poiſonous Draught, to ſtupify the Perſon who drank it, that, by benumming his Senſes he might feel leſs Pain. Thoſe that differ from this, ſay, that by the Piety of ſome of the Diſciples, and not improbably of ſome of thoſe good Women who uſed to miniſter to *Jeſus*, there was prepared *Wine mingled with Myrrh*, which according to *Pliny*, among the *Levantines*, was an excellent and pleaſant Mixture, and ſuch as the Piety and Indulgence of theſe Nations uſed to adminiſter to condemned Perſons, to fortify their drooping Spirits againſt the Terrors of approaching Death. But ſtill there is a Difference between the two *Evangeliſts*, ſince the former affirms, that the Potion offered to our Saviour was *Vinegar mingled with Gall*, the latter, *Wine mingled with Myrrh*; and, to reconcile this, the eaſieſt Way is to ſay (with our Learned Dr. *Lightfoot*) that there were two Cups offered to our Lord at the Time of his Paſſion, one of *Wine mixed with Myrrh*, by ſome of his Friends, before he wrs nailed to the Croſs; and the other of *Vinegar*, by the Soldiers, in a ſcoffing and inſulting Manner, after he was nailed to the Croſs; which is better than to ſay, with ſome great Men, that the ancient Tranſlator of St. *Matthew* from the *Hebrew* or *Syriack*, miſtaking the Word *Marra*, which properly ſignifies *Bitterneſs*, might put *Gall* (which in *Syriac* is *Marar*, and derived from the ſame Root) inſtead of *Myrrh*.

The

The Malefactors here mentioned, were probably ſome of thoſe factious, and ſeditious Gangs, which *Judea* at this Time was full of. Under Pretence of publick Liberty, they committed all Manner of Violence and Outrage; and, ſtirring up the People againſt the *Roman* Government, drew upon the Nation all the Calamity which afterwards befell it. As it was cuſtomary to crucify ſeveral Malefactors at the ſame Time, eſpecially if convicted of the ſame Crimes, our Saviour, who was accuſed by the *Jews* of ſeditious Practices, had two, who were really guilty of that Crime, executed with him; and they placed him in the midſt, as in the moſt honourable Place, purely in Deriſion, and with the ſame malevolent Spirit, that made them array him in a purple Robe, a Sceptre, and a Crown.

The Inſcription which *Pilate* ordered to be fix'd on the Top of our Saviour's Croſs, was in the three moſt general Languages; in *Hebrew* or the *Syriac*, which was then the common Language of the Country; in *Greek*, which was the Language of Commerce almoſt all the *Eaſt* over; and *Latin*, becauſe of the Majeſty of the *Roman* Empire, which, at that Time, had extended its Dominion over the then known World. The whole Inſcription, however, is ſaid to have been written after the *Jewiſh* Manner, *i. e.* from the Right-hand to the Left, that it might be more legible to the *Jews*, tho', by converſing with the *Romans*, they began now to underſtand a little *Latin*.

Some of the Fathers are of Opinion, that our Saviour's Coat, for which the four Soldiers caſt Lots, was made of two Pieces of woolen Stuff, wove in a Loom, and ſo fine-drawn, that the Joining

Joining could not be perceived. Others will have it, that it was all Needle-work, *i. e.* knit, not wove from Top to Bottom: But *Braunius*, in his Treatiſe *de Veſtitu ſacerdotum Hebræorum*, has plainly proved, that the Ancients had the Art of weaving any Habit, of what Make or Size ſoever, all of one Piece in a Loom; that, in ſeveral *Eaſtern* Countries the Art is ſtill preſerved, and practiſed; and that himſelf made a Machine (which *Calmet*, in his *Dictionary* under the Word *Veſtments*, has given us) wherein ſuch an Habit might be wrought. As it was cuſtomary formerly for Women to weave Stuffs and Cloath, not for their own wearing only, but for their Husbands and Childrens Uſe (for ſo the Character of the virtuous Woman in *Solomon*, Prov. xxxi. 13. and the Practice of *Penelope*, the Wife of *Ulyſſes*, ſhew) it was an ancient Tradition, that the *bleſſed Virgin* herſelf wove her Son's Coat; but, that ſhe made it for him when he was young; that it grew with him as he increaſed in Stature; and continued alwas freſh, without Decay, is a mere Fiction, in order to aſſimulate it to the Habits which the *Iſraelites* wore in the Wilderneſs: Nor can it be eaſily credited, that the *holy Coat*, which is kept in the Cathedral Church at *Treves*, is the very ſame that our Saviour had on before his Crucifixion.

If we compare *Matth.* xxvii. 44. (where it is ſaid, *that the Thieves, who were crucified with* Jeſus, *caſt the ſame in his Teeth*) with what we find in *Luke* xxiii. 39. (where 'tis ſaid, *one of the Malefactors, that was hanged, reviled on him*) we may be apt to fancy ſome Contradiction in the *Evangeliſts*: But this the Commentators reconcile, by

by ſhewing that it was a very common Thing in the *Hebrew* Stile, to uſe the plural Number inſtead of the ſingular: As when it is ſaid, that the Ark reſted on the Mountains of *Ararat*, Gen. viii. 4. *i. e.* on one of the Mountains, and that *God overthrew the Cities where* Lot *dwelt*, Gen. xix. 29. when he could only dwell in one at a Time; with ſeveral other Examples, both in the *Old* and *New-Teſtament*. But I ſee no Reaſon why we may not underſtand this Paſſage as St. *Chryſoſtom* and St. *Jerom* have done, *viz. That both of the Thieves did, at firſt, rail on* Jeſus, *probably thinking, by that Artifice to obtain ſome Help towards procuring their Pardon; but being diſappointed of their Hopes, and hearing* Jeſus *pray for his Crucifiers, one of them was thereby prevailed upon and converted:*" Eſpecially ſince, according to this Interpretation, the Operations of God's Grace upon this Man's Mind, were more ſudden and ſtrong, and his Converſion more miraculous.

The Thief is called by ſome Authors, *Dimas* or *Diſmus*; and, out of the falſe Goſpel of *Nicodemus*, they produce many Fables concerning him, but too abſurd to be here related. Several of the Fathers, however, give him the Title of a Martyr, becauſe of the Teſtimony which he bore to Truth, even when it ſeemed to be utterly deſerted by every one elſe.

The Word *Paradiſe* comes from the *Hebrew*, or rather from the *Chaldee*, *Pardes*; and, according to the Force of the Original, it ſhould properly ſignify an Orchard, or Plantation of Fruit-trees, as in ſome Paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, particularly in *Nehem.* ii. 8. it denotes a *Foreſt*. The *Septuagint* made uſe of the Word *Paradiſos*, when they ſpeak of the *Garden of Eden*, which

the Lord planted in the Beginning of the World, and therein placed our firſt Parents. The *Jews* commonly called *Paradiſe, the Garden of Eden*, and they imagine, that at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, they ſhall there enjoy an earthly Felicity, in the Midſt of all Sorts of Delights, and, till the Reſurrection, and the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, they think their Souls ſhall abide here in a State of Reſt. In the Books of the *New-Teſtament*, the Word *Paradiſe* is put for a Place of Delight, where the Souls of the Bleſſed enjoy everlaſting Happineſs; but where our Lord promiſes the penitent Thief, that he ſhould be with him in *Paradiſe*, it is thought by the Generality of the Fathers, that he means Heaven itſelf; tho' modern Commentators make no more of it, than that State of Felicity, which God has appointed for the Reception of the Pious, until the Time of the general Reſurrection. Whether the Place of departed Souls is above, within, or beneath the higheſt Heavens; whether there is one common Receptacle for the Souls of the Righteous and Unrighteous till the Reſurrection; or whether, from their Departure out of Bodies, they dwell in ſeparate Manſions, (as is more probable) are Speculations we are no ways concerned to be inquiſitive about; whilſt we are ſatisfied of this main Truth, that the Righteous are, in the intermediate Time, between their Death and Reſurrection, in a State of Happineſs, and the Wicked in a State of Miſery. For, as far as our Apprehenſions of theſe Matters go, a material Place can no ways contribute, either to increaſe or diminiſh the Happineſs or Miſery of an immaterial Spirit. Spirits that are diveſted of Fleſh and Blood, wherever they are, carry Heaven or Hell along with them. The

good Angels are as happy here upon Earth, whilſt they are employed in the Execution of God's Will, as whilſt they are converſant in the Regions above, becauſe *they do always behold the Face of God, in whoſe Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy*; and *Satan* was no more happy, when *he came among the Sons of God to preſent himſelf before the Lord*, Job i. 6. than he was when he was *going to and fro in the Earth*. The Happineſs and Miſery of pure Spirits hath no Relation, that we know of, to the Place where they are; but the Happineſs and Miſery of pure embodied Spirits, or of Men who are made up of Souls and Bodies, have a Dependance upon the Place of their Abode; and therefore we are ſure, that wherever ſeparate Souls are lodged till the Reſurrection, after the Reſurrection, righteous and wicked Men ſhall have Places allotted to them, ſuitable to their different States; the former ſhall be carried up to the higheſt Heavens, and the latter ſhall be thrown down to the nethermoſt Hell.

That *Alphæus* and *Cleophas* were one and the ſame Perſon, is plain from hence, —— That *James*, who is called the Son of *Mary* the Wife of *Cleophas*, is the ſame with *James* the Son of *Alphæus*; as indeed, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, *Alphæus* and *Cleophas* differ only in the Manner in which the *Greeks* have written, or pronounced theſe two Names. It is thought that ſhe was the Siſter of the Holy Virgin, and the Mother of *James the Leſs*, of *Joſes*, of *Simeon*, and of *Judas*, who in the Goſpel are called the Brethren of our Lord, *i. e.* his Couſin-germans. When or where ſhe died, is a Matter of much Uncertainty: But the *Greeks* keep the eighth of *April* in Me-

mory of the holy Women, who brought Perfumes to embalm the Body of *Chriſt*, and pretend, at this Time, to have their Bodies at *Conſtantinople*, in the Church of the holy Virgin, built by *Juſtin* II. tho' others talk of the Tranſlation of her Body, in particular, into the City of *Veroli*, near *Rome*; while others again pretend, that it is in a little City of *Provence*, called the *three Marys*, on the Banks of the *Rhone*, and of the Sea. All Fictions equally credible!

The Generality of Commentators do infer from our Lord's recommending his Mother to his beloved Diſciple, that her Husband *Joſeph* was at that Time dead; and therefore our Lord took Care that ſhe ſhould not be deſtitute, by charging his beloved Diſciple to treat her as his Mother; and he, accordingly not only received her into his own Houſe, as long as he continued in *Paleſtine*, but, when he removed to *Epheſus*, took her along with him, where (according to the Account of the Fathers of the Council held there) ſhe is ſaid to have died, and been buried in a very old Age. Others, however, maintain, that ſhe died and was buried at *Jeruſalem*; and they farther add, that the Apoſtles being diſperſed in different Parts of the World to labour in the Preaching of the Goſpel, all on a ſudden, were miraculouſly tranſported to *Jeruſalem*, that they might be preſent at the Deceaſe of the bleſſed Virgin; that after her Death, they buried her in the Valley of *Gethſemane*, where, for three whole Days, were heard Concerts of heavenly Singers; and that, at the End of the three Days, when the Concert ceaſed, and St. *Thomas*, who had not been preſent at the Burial, was deſirous to ſee her Corpſe, they

they opened her Tomb again; but not finding the Body there, they thence concluded, that God had been pleaſed to honour it with Immortality, by a Reſurrection previous to that of other Men. But theſe are Traditions that (to ſpeak the ſofteſt Thing of them) deſerve no Regard at all.

But to return to our Hiſtory.

During theſe melancholy Tranſactions, the whole Frame of Nature began to be changed: The Sun withdrew its Light; the Stars appeared; and the Eclipſe was the more remarkable, becauſe the Moon, at that Time, was not in Conjunction. This Eclipſe began about twelve, and laſted till three in the Afternoon; when all Things were full of Horror and Amazement. Men's Hearts began to relent, and inſtead of their former Inſults, they ſtood in ſilent Expectance of what would be the Iſſue. All this while our bleſſed Lord continued meek and ſilent, tho' languiſhing and waſting under the Agonies which his Body endured, and the heavy Load of the divine Indignation againſt Sin; till, in the Words of the *Pſalmiſt*, he complained at laſt, *Eli! Eli! Lamaſabacthani*, i. e. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

One of the Soldiers hearing the Word *Eli* or *Elohi*, out of Ignorance of the *Hebrew* Tongue, thought that he called for *Elias* to help him in his Diſtreſs; and thereupon dipping a Spunge in Vinegar, put it on a Reed, which St. *John* calls a Stalk of Hyſſop, and (as he complained of being thirſty) gave it him to drink. Others, however were for letting it alone, to ſee whether *Elias* would come and help him; but when he had taſted the Vinegar, and now knew that all the Types and Prophecies concerning him were

fulfilled

fulfilled, his Father's Wrath appeaſed, and the great Work of Man's Redemption accompliſhed, he ſaid, *It is finiſhed*, and then, *bowing down his Head*, he recommended his Soul into his Father's Hands, and ſo *gave up the Ghoſt*.

Upon his Expiration there immediately happened a terrible Earthquake, which rent the Vail of the Temple from Top to Bottom, and ſplit the Rocks, and opened the Graves and Tombs, ſo that the Bodies of ſeveral who were dead, aroſe and went into *Jeruſalem*, where they were ſeen and known by many. Theſe Prodigies which attended our Lord's Death, ſtruck the Spectators with ſuch Amazement, that, as they returned home, they ſmote their Breaſts, and with great Lamentation, declared that the Perſon who had ſuffered Day, was innocent. Nay the very Centurion, and other Soldiers, who attended the Execution, from a Conviction of what they had ſeen, were not afraid to affirm, that he certainly was the Son of God.

The Day whereon our Saviour ſuffered, was the Eve, or Preparation to the Paſchal Feſtival, which, that Year, was on the *Jewiſh* Sabbath-Day, and ſo was a Feaſt, and Sabbath together. That therefore ſo great and ſolemn a Day might not be profaned by the Suſpenſion of the Bodies on the Croſs, the Rulers of the *Jews* came, and requeſted of *Pilate*, that their Legs might be broken to haſten their Deaths, and their Bodies taken down; which, accordingly was executed upon the two Thieves: But, when the Soldiers came to *Jeſus*, and found him already dead, inſtead of breaking his Legs, one of them pierced his Side with a Spear, from which iſſued out a great Quantity of Blood and Water.

Among

Among the Diſciples of our Lord, there was one named *Joſeph*, a Man of great Wealth and Honour, born in *Arimathæa*, and, not improbably, one of the Council of the grand *Sanhedrim*, but who ſtood in ſome Fear of them, while our Saviour was alive. After his Death, however, he took Courage, and going to *Pilate*, begged Leave of him to take down the Body of *Jeſus*, and bury it. The Governor was ſurprized to hear that he was dead ſo ſoon; but being informed by the Centurion, that it actually was ſo, he ordered the Body to be delivered to *Joſeph*, who, for the preſent, wrapped it up in fine Linnen Cloaths, which he had provided for that Purpoſe; and, at the ſame Time, *Nicodemus* (another private Diſciple of our Lord's) brought a Mixture of Myrrh and Aloes, with other Spices and Perfumes, to embalm his Body, according to the Manner of the *Jews*.

Again let us review the foregoing Paſſages.

Eli! Eli! Lamaſabacthani; *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Theſe Words are taken from the twenty ſecond *Pſalm*, which is allowed, by all Commentators, to relate to the *Meſſiah*; for which Reaſon our Saviour made uſe of them, rather than any other, to evidence his Title to that Character. Now, in the *Hebrew* Way of ſpeaking, 'tis certain that God is ſaid to leave or forſake any Perſon, when he ſuffers him to fall into great Calamities, and lie under great Misfortunes, and does not help him out of them. To this purpoſe *Zion*, having been long afflicted, is brought in by the Prophet, complaining *the Lord hath forſaken me, the Lord hath forgotten me*, Chap. xlix. 14. And as the royal *Pſalmiſt* is very frequent in ſuch Complaints, ſo he explains the Senſe of

of them, when he addreſſes himſelf to God, *Why art thou ſo far from my Prayer*, ſo that, tho' *I cry in the Day-time, thou heareſt not?* Pſal. xxii. 1, 2. That *David* was not fallen into any Deſpondency, is manifeſt from his calling God ſo fiducially his God; and that our bleſſed Saviour was not (as ſome think) under any Failure of his Truſt in God, or any Preturbation of Spirit from the Senſe of divine Wrath, is evident from his ſaying of his ſuffering Condition, *it is finiſhed*, and from the very Words, wherein he breathed his laſt, *Father, into thy Hands I commit my Spirit.*

The Vinegar and Spunge, in Executions of condemned Perſons, were ſet ſet ready to ſtop the too violent Flux of Blood, that the Malefactor might be the longer in dying, but to the bleſſed *Jeſus* they were exhibited with Scorn; for being mingled with Gall, the Mixture was more horrid and unpleaſant.

It may be pretended, perhaps, that a Branch of Hyſſop, might not be long enough to reach our Saviour's Mouth, as he was hanging upon the Croſs; but, beſides that, Croſſes were not, in ſome Places, erected ſo high, but that Beaſts of Prey could reach the Bodies, that were faſtened to them; and that Hyſſop, in theſe Countries, as well as Muſtard-Seed, was of a much longer Growth than it is with us; I cannot ſee, why the Perſon, that offered our Saviour this Vinegar, might not make uſe of a Ladder, if the Croſs was ſo high that he could not fairly reach him: Nor is the Difference in St. *Matthew*'s calling it a Reed, which St. *John* calls Hyſſop, of any Manner of Moment; becauſe the *Greek* Word is put to ſignify a Stalk, Shoot, or Branch; ſo that St. *Matthew* ſpeaks of that in general, which St. *John* ſpecifies in particular.

There

Our Bleſſed Saviour Jesus Chriſt
on the croſs.

There was a Tradition among the *Jews*, that it was *Elias*'s proper Office to come and ſuccour ſuch as were in Miſery: And, accordingly, ſome of the *Jews*, either deceived with the Reſemblance of the Words, thought that our Lord called *Elias* to his Help; or elſe giving a malicious Turn to the Senſe of the Words, which they well enough underſtood, they inſulted him, for his calling in vain *Elias* to his Help.

The original Phraſe may denote a delivering up, or (as our Saviour expreſſes it, *Luke* xxiii. 46.) a *committing his Spirit into the Hands of God*, as a ſacred Truſt to be reſtored again, and united to his Body, at the Time prefixed by his own infinite Wiſdom; and plainly implies ſuch a Diſſolution, and actual Separation of Soul and Body, as every common Man undergoes, when he dies: But herein is a remarkable Difference, that what is in other Men the Effect of Neceſſity, was in *Jeſus* a voluntary Act, and the Effect of his own free Choice. Hence the Generality of Interpreters have thought, that St. *John* takes Notice that *Chriſt* bowed his Head, before he gave up the Ghoſt; whereas, in common Caſes, the falling of the Head follows after the Breath's going out of the Body: And hence alſo St. *Mark* obſerves, that *Jeſus*'s crying out with ſo loud and ſtrong a Voice, immediately before his expiring, was one Reaſon that moved the Centurion to think him an extraordinary Perſon; for this ſhewed that it was not the Exceſs of Pain and Sorrow, that had tired out Nature and haſtened his Death, but that he, who (as himſelf profeſſes, *John* x. 18.) *had Power to lay down his Life*, and could not have it taken from him, without his own Permiſſion

and Conſent, did freely and voluntarily lay it down, at ſuch a Time, as himſelf ſaw convenient.

Some are of Opinion, that the Earthquake at the Death of our Saviour, was the ſame that happened in the Reign of *Tiberius Cæſar*, and was the greateſt that ever was known in the Memory of Man. Both *Pliny* and *Macrobius* make mention of it; and the latter informs us, that it deſtroyed no leſs than twelve Cities in *Aſia*: But, by the ſacred Text it appears, that the Earthquake, here mentioned, affected only the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, and the Parts which are ſpecified, the Vail, the Ground, the Rocks, the Tombs, *&c.* Nor does it ſeem improbable, that this Prodigy was ſhewn particularly in that Place, to foretel the Deſtruction of the Temple, and its Service, upon the People's ſad Impiety in crucifying the Lord of Life.

In the ſecond Temple, between the *Holy Place*, and the *Moſt Holy* (ſays *Maimonides*) there was no Partition-wall, tho' in the firſt Temple there was one, built of the Thickneſs of a Cubit. The Diviſion between them was made by two Vails, one from the Extremity of the *Holy Place*, and the other from the Extremity of the *Moſt Holy*, with a void Space of a Cubit between. The like Form of Separation was obſerved in the Temple, which *Herod* rebuilt, as *Joſephus* informs us; and therefore it muſt be a Miſtake in thoſe, who think that this Vail was a Partition-wall of Stones. Whether of the two Vails, that which belonged to the *Holy Place*, or that which hung in the *Moſt Holy*, was, at this Time, rent in twain, is a Queſtion among the Antients, tho' the Words of the Author to the *Hebrews*, where he tells us, that *Chriſt*,

Chriſt, as our High-prieſt, *has conſecrated for us a new Way through the Vail*, ſo that we may with *Boldneſs enter into the holieſt by the Blood of* Jeſus, *Heb.* x. 19, *&c.* ſeems to be a pretty clear Determination of it.

In the Church of the Sepulchre (which ſtands on *Mount Calvary*) is ſtill to be ſeen that memorable Cleft in the Rock, occaſioned, as it is ſaid, by the Earthquake which happened at our Lord's Crucifixion. This Cleft (as to what now appears of it) is about a Span wide at its upper Part, and two deep. After this it cloſes: But then it opens again below, and runs down to an unknown Depth of Earth. That this Rent was made by the Earthquake, which happened at our Lord's Paſſion, there is only Tradition to prove: But that it is a natural and genuine Breach, and not counterfeited by any Art, the Senſe and Reaſon of every one, that ſees it, may convince him; for the Sides of it fit like two Tallies to each other, and yet it runs in ſuch intricate Windings, as could not be well counterfeited by Art, or performed by any Inſtrument.

Since St. *Paul* ſtiles our Saviour *the Firſt-Born from the Dead*, Coloſſ. i. 18. and *the Fruits of them that ſlept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. moſt Commentators are of Opinion, tho' ſeveral Tombs were opened, as ſoon as our Saviour expired, yet none of the Saints aroſe, until he returned from the Grave: But then, who theſe Saints were, it is no eaſy Matter to conjecture. Some think, that the *Man after God's own Heart*, King *David*, or ſome of the ancient Patriarchs, might beſt deſerve this Pre-eminence: But on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, St. *Peter* tells the *Jews* plainly, that the Body of *David* was ſtill in its Sepulchre, and not *aſcended*

into Heaven, Acts ii. 29, 34. and St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, tells us of the Patriarchs, that *they had not received the Promiſe, God having deſigned, that they, without us, ſhould not be made perfect*, Heb. xi. 39, 40. The moſt probable Conjecture therefore, is, that they were ſome of thoſe who believed in *Jeſus* (as old *Simeon* did) and died a little before his Crucifixion; becauſe, of theſe it is ſaid, that they *went into the Holy City, and appeared to many*, and ſo, very probably were well known to thoſe, to whom they appeared, as having been their Contemporaries.

The Centurion who attended at *Chriſt*'s Crucifixion, according to ſome, was named *Longinus*; and the Tradition is, —— That, upon his Converſion to the Chriſtian Faith, being expelled from the *Roman* Army wherein he ſerved, he returned to *Cappadocia*, where he began to preach *Jeſus Chriſt*, but was there beheaded, and his Head carried to *Pilate*. But all this ſeems to be a Fable, for which there is no Foundation in Hiſtory.

That *the Son of God* did not always ſignify one, who was ſo by an eternal Generation, but only one that was his beloved and adopted Son, is apparent from hence, that what is here called *the Son of God*, is, in St. *Luke* xxiii. 47. ſaid to be a juſt Man. For tho' the *Jews* very well knew, from the ſecond Pſalm, that their *Meſſiah* was to be the *Son of God*; yet that they did not know him to be ſo, in the higher Senſe of the Word, ſeems to be evident, becauſe they did not know how *David* could call *him Lord*, Matt. xxii. 16.

The *Jews* had a ſtrict Injunction in their Law, that the dead Bodies of thoſe, who were executed, ſhould not hang all Night, but by all Means be buried that Day, *Deut.* xxi. 22, 23. but the *Romans*

mans uſed to do otherwiſe. They ſuffered the Bodies to hang upon the Croſs always until they were dead; and in ſome Caſes, a conſiderable Time longer. On this Occaſion it ſeems, as if the *Jews* had left the *Romans* to follow their own Cuſtom, in Relation to the crucified Perſons, and were in no Concern to have them taken down, had it not been for the near Approach of their Paſſover, whoſe Joy and Feſtivity, they thought might be dampt by ſo melancholy a Sight. Upon this Account they petition *Pilate* to have them removed: And the Reaſon why *Pilate* might be rather induced to grant their Requeſt, was, that the *Romans* themſelves had ſuch Reſpects for the Feaſts of their Emperors, that on thoſe Days they always took down the Bodies from the Croſs, and gave them to their Relations.

The Prophecy, which foretold, *that a Bone of him ſhould not be broken*, is uſually referred to the Command concerning the Paſchal-Lamb, *Thou ſhalt not break a bone of it*, Exod. xii. 46. But, as *David* was likewiſe a Type of *Chriſt*, we cannot ſee, why it may not refer to theſe Words of his, *He keepeth all his Bones, ſo that none of them is broken*, Pſal. xxxiv. 19. or why the Promiſe, which reſpects all righteous Perſons, might not more particularly be fulfilled in the juſt one.

The Man who pierced his Side with a Spear, was not one of the Horſe (as is uſually painted) but of the Foot Soldiers; becauſe a Spear, or ſhort Pike, was one Part of the Armour belonging to the *Roman* Infantry; and the Reaſon why this was done, was, not only that a Prediction concerning him might be fulfilled, (*Zach.* xii. 10, 12. which the *Jews* apply to the *Meſſiah*) but that his Death might be put beyond all Diſpute, which, had

had it been doubtful, muſt have made his Reſurrection (which is the greateſt Aſſurance we have of our own Reſurrection, and Glory with him) remain doubtful likewiſe.

St. *John* the *Evangeliſt*, who was an Eye-witneſs of this Paſſage, affirms it in a particular Manner, Chap. xix. 35. and, in his firſt Epiſtle, Chap. v. 6. makes it a Matter of great Moment, when he tells us, *This is he that came by Water and Blood; not by Water only, but by Water and Blood.* The Force of whoſe Reaſoning (according to the learned *Hammond*) is this, —— *That, as Water was the Emblem of our Saviour's Purity, and Blood the Evidence of his Fortitude and Patience, and both of theſe proceeded from his Side, they jointly evince the Neceſſity of ſuch Purity and Patience, in every one that believes aright in* Chriſt. The *Jewiſh* Doctors have a Tradition, (as Dr. *Lightfoot* acquaints us) that when *Moſes* ſmote the Rock, there firſt came forth Blood, and then Water. Whether the Apoſtle might have reſpect to that Tradition when he calls *Chriſt* that Rock, 1 *Cor.* x. 4. is uncertain; but, among the many other important Deſigns of this Water and Blood, the Antients have well obſerved, that, by a ſpecial Act of God's Providence, there flowed, at this Time, from our Saviour's Side, the two Sacraments of his Church, *Baptiſm* and the *Supper of the Lord.* As to the natural Reaſon of this Flux of Water and Blood from our Lord's Body, *Anatomiſts* tells us, that there is a *Capſula*, near the Heart, called the *Pericardium*, which hath Water in it, of continual Uſe to cool the Heart; and that the coming out of Water here with the Blood, was a ſure Evidence of the wounding his very Heart, and conſeqeuntly of thecertainty of his Death.

The

The Riches and honourable Station of *Joſeph*, are mentioned, not out of any Vanity and Oſtentation, that a Perſon of ſo conſiderable a Figure ſhould pay Reſpect to the Body of our bleſſed Lord; but chiefly to ſhew how ſtrangely God brought about an ancient Prophecy concerning the *Meſſiah*, *viz.* that, notwithſtanding the infamous Manner of his dying, he ſhould *make his Grave with the Rich, at his Death*, Iſai. liii. 9. which, in itſelf, was a moſt unlikely Thing; not only becauſe the Bodies of them, that were crucified, did, by the *Roman* Laws, hang upon the Gibbet, ſometimes until they were conſumed; but becauſe the *Jews*, (tho' they did not allow of this Severity to the Dead) did nevertheleſs always bury their Malefactors in ſome publick, neglected, and ignominious Place; and ſo, in all Probability, muſt our Saviour have been treated, had not *Joſeph* applied himſelf to the Governor, in whoſe Diſpoſal the Bodies of executed Perſons were.

Ramatha (from whence *Arimathæa* is formed) ſignifies *Height*, It is placed by St. *Jerom* between *Lydda* and *Joppa*; but modern Travellers ſpeak of it as lying between *Joppa* and *Jeruſalem*, and ſituated on a Mountain, tho' very different from *Ramathaim-Zophim*, the Place where *Samuel* was born, and which lay to the *North*, whereas *Arimathæa* was to the *Weſt* of *Jeruſalem*.

It may well ſeem ſtrange, that *Joſeph*, who never durſt openly profeſs a Regard to *Jeſus*, while living, ſhould now, when he had ſuffered all the Ignominy of a Malefactor, not to ſtick to intereſt himſelf for his honourable Interment. But, beſides, that this might be an Inſtance of the Efficacy of thoſe Impreſſions, which God makes

upon Men's Minds, even at the moſt unlikely Seaſons of prevailing; the Deſire which *Pilate* had expreſſed, to ſave our Lord's Life, and avowed Unwillingneſs to condemn him, together with the Prodigies that had accompanied his Crucifixion, and made now every Heart relent, might be Motive enough for him to go in boldly to *Pilate*, (as St. *Mark* expreſſes it) and beg the Body of him, before it was taken from the Croſs. According to the *Miſhna*, the neareſt Relations of thoſe that ſuffered as Criminals, were not permitted to put their Bodies into Family Tombs, until their fleſh was all conſumed in the publick Sepulchres; and this might poſſibly be the Reaſon why *Joſeph* made ſuch Haſte with his Requeſt to the Governor, *viz.* that he might prevent our Lord from being caſt into one of the publick Charnel-houſes, appointed for the Reception of Malefactors Bodies.

The *Nicodemus* above mentioned, is the ſame Ruler of the *Jews*, and Maſter of *Iſrael*, as the *Evangeliſts* calls him, *John* iii. 1, 10. who, at our Lord's firſt coming to *Jeruſalem*, after he had entered upon his Miniſtry, held a private Conference with him, and for ever after was his Diſciple, tho' he made no open Profeſſion of it 'till after his Paſſion. Whether it was before or after this Time, that he received Baptiſm from ſome of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples, is a Thing uncertain; but there is Reaſon to believe, that the *Jews*, when they came to be informed of it, depoſed him from the Dignity of a Senator, excommunicated him, and drove him out of *Jeruſalem*. Nay, it is farther ſaid, that they would have put him to death, but that, in Conſideration to *Gamaliel*, who was his Uncle, or Couſin-german, they contented them-

themſelves with beating him almoſt to death, and plundering his Goods. 'Tis added likewiſe, that *Gamaliel* conveyed him to his Country-houſe, where he provided him with Things neceſſary for his Support, and when he died, buried him honourably by St. *Stephen*.

But to go on with our Narration.

Not far from the Place of Execution, there was a Garden belonging to *Joſeph*, where he had lately hewn out of a Rock, a Sepulchre for his own proper Interment. Having therefore embalmed our Saviour's Body, and wound it up in the Linnen Cloaths, here they buried, and with a large Stone cut out of the Rock for that Purpoſe, cloſed the Mouth of the Sepulchre: But *Mary Magdalen*, and the other Women, who were preſent at his Death, and aſſiſted at his Burial, having taken good Notice of the Place where he was laid, went and prepared freſh Spices for his farther Embalmment, as ſoon as the Sabbath-day was over.

On the Sabbath-day the Rulers of the *Jews* came to *Pilate*, and informed him, *That our Lord (whom they called an Impoſtor) having, in his Life-Time, made it his Boaſt, that on the third Day, he would riſe again from the Dead, they therefore requeſted of him, that he would order the Sepulchre to be kept under a ſtrong Guard, until that Day was paſſed, leſt his Diſciples ſhould ſteal him away by Night, and then give in out, that he was riſen from the Dead; which might prove a more dangerous Seduction to the People, than any Thing they had yet fallen into.* Whereupon he gave them Leave to a Detachment of the Guard of the Temple, and to poſt them near the Sepulchre; which accordingly they did; and, to ſecure it againſt all private

Attempts, ſet a Seal on the Stone that was at the Mouth of it.

Early next Morning, even as the Sun was riſing, *Mary Magdalen*, and the other Woman, who, on *Friday* Evening had prepared Spices and Perfumes, went to the Sepulchre, to embalm again our Saviour's Body; being ignorant of the Guard that was placed there. Their whole Care and Conſultation, in the Way, was how they might get the large Stone, that was at the Entrance, removed. But, before they arrived at the Place, an Angel from Heaven had rolled it away, and ſat upon it; at the Sight of whom (for his Countenance was like Lightning) and at the Noiſe of the Earthquake, which accompanied his Appearance, the Guards fell down, like ſo many dead Men; ſo the Women had free Entrance into the Sepulchre, but were not a little aſtoniſhed to ſee the Body gone, and an Angel, in a refulgent Habit, ſitting in the Place, where it had laid. Frightened at this Apparition, they made all the Haſte they could, out of the Sepulchre, but were met by another Angel, in the like glorious Apparel, who not only acquainted them with our Lord's Reſurrection, according to what he had foretold his Diſciples; but, to give them a fuller Conviction, reconducted them into the Sepulchre; ſhewed them that the Place where he laid was empty; and ordered them to go immediately, and carry the Apoſtles (but more eſpecially *Peter*) the News thereof. The Women accordingly, filled with Fear, and Joy, and Wonder altogether, haſtened to find out the Apoſtles, to whom they related what they had heard and ſeen; but, inſtead of believing them, they looked upon this, as no more than the

the Product of a weak and frightened Imagination.

Out of Curioſity, however, *Peter* and *John* ran to the Sepulchre, and found the Thing true according to the Women's Report; the Body gone; the burying Cloaths lying on the Ground; and the Napkin, that was about his Head, very carefully folded, and laid by itſelf. Notwithſtanding this, ſuch was their Incredulity, that they returned home, never ſuppoſing any Thing elſe, but that ſome-body had taken him away. *Mary Magdalen*, who, by this Time, was again returned to the Sepulchre, ſtayed behind the two Apoſtles weeping; and, as ſhe ſtooped down to look in, ſaw two Angels in bright Apparel, ſitting where the Body had lain, one at the Head, and the other at the Feet. As the Angels were enquiring of her the Occaſion of her Tears, and ſhe telling them, that it was the Loſs of her Lord's Body, ſhe happened to turn herſelf round, and ſaw *Jeſus* himſelf; but, ſuppoſing him to be the Maſter of the Garden (where the Sepulchre was) ſhe deſired of him, that if he had removed the Body any where, he would be ſo kind as to let her know, that ſhe might take Care of it. Hereupon, our Lord calling her by her Name, ſhe immediately knew him, and throwing herſelf at his Feet, was going to embrace him; but he forbad her, upon the Account, that he had not, as yet, aſcended to his Father, and only required her to acquaint his Apoſtles with his Reſurrection, and immediate Aſcenſion into Heaven; which ſhe failed not to do, but ſtill they gave no Credit to her Report.

In the mean Time, ſome of the Guards, in a great Fright, fled into the City, and related all that had occurred, to the Chief-prieſts and Rulers,

who immediately aſſembled themſelves to conſult upon this important Affair, and came at length to this Reſolution, *viz. To bribe the Soldiers with a large Sum of Money, and thereby engage them to give it out, among the People, that while themſelves were aſleep, the Diſciples of* Jeſus *came, and ſtole him away; promiſing them withal, that, in Caſe this their pretended Neglect ſhould come to the Governor's Ears, they would take Care to pacify him.* The Soldiers accordingly took the Money, and obeyed their Orders: And this Report was current among the *Jews* for many Years after.

Here let us review what we have now been relating.

This Garden has been long ſince converted into a Church, called *the Church of the Sepulchre*, as being built over the Place, where our Lord's Sepulchre was. To fit this Place for the Structure of a Church, the firſt Founders were obliged to reduce it to a plain Area, which they did by cutting down ſeveral Parts of the Rock, and by raiſing up others: But, in this Work, Care was taken, that none of thoſe Parts of the Place, which were more immediately concerned in our Lord's Paſſion, ſhould be either altered or diminiſhed; inſomuch that that Part of it, where *Chriſt* is ſaid to have been faſtened to, and lifted upon the Croſs, is left entire, ſtanding at this Day, eighteen Steps above the common Floor of the Church, and the holy Sepulchre itſelf, which was at firſt a Cave hewn into a Rock under Ground, having had the Rock cut away from it all around, is now, as it were, a Grotto above Ground.

There are ſeveral Circumſtances in the Deſcription of our Saviour's Tomb, which contribute very

greatly to the Confirmation of the Truth of his Reſurrection. As Firſt, The Place of his Interment was near adjoining to the City, that thereby the Miracle of his Reſurrection might be better known to all the *Jews*, and his own Apoſtles more eſpecially. Secondly, His Tomb was a new one, wherein never Man before was laid, and therefore, when his Body left this Sepulchre empty, no Suſpicion could remain of its being any other Body, than that which *Joſeph* had taken down from the Croſs, and diſpoſed of in that Place. Thirdly, It was hewn out of a Rock, incapable of being undermined, or dug through; and therefore there was no poſſible Way for the Perſon depoſited in a Place ſo contrived, to get out again, except only at the Mouth or Door of the Cave. And yet, Fourthly, A large Stone, which (according to Mr. *Maundrel*, who ſaw it) is two Yards and a Quarter long, one broad, and one thick, cloſed up the Entrance of it; all which was watched by a ſtrong Guard of ſixty Soldiers: So that, as the Centry would not ſuffer the Body to be conveyed out by this Way, the Nature of the Place would not allow it by any other; therefore, had not our Lord been more than Man, he could never have forced his Paſſage out. Of ſuch mighty Significance it is to us, that ſo punctual a Deſcription is given the World of our bleſſed Lord's Burial, and all the Circumſtances relating to it, ſince they all contribute great Strength to theſe two moſt important Articles of the *Chriſtian* Faith, the Death and Reſurrection of *Jeſus*.

This Sepulchre of *Joſeph*'s, which fell to our Lord's Share (according to the Deſcription of thoſe that have lately ſeen it) is a Kind of ſmall Chamber, almoſt ſquare within; whoſe Height,

from

from Bottom to Top, is eight Feet and an Inch; its Length ſix Feet and an Inch; and its Breadth, fifteen Feet and ten Inches; its Entrance, which looks towards the *Eaſt*, is but four feet high and two feet ten Inches Wide. The Place within, where our Lord's Body was laid, takes up a whole Side of the Cave. It is a Stone raiſed from the Ground to the Height of two Feet and four Inches; whoſe Length is five Feet eleven Inches; and its Breadth two Feet and eight Inches, placed length-wiſe from *Eaſt* and *Weſt*. The Stone is ſtill remaining, even to this Day; but the particular Parts of it are not viſible, it being incruſted over with white Marble.*

'Tis generally ſuppoſed, that this Guard of the Temple was a large Detachment of *Roman* Soldiers; who, in the Time of the Feaſt, kept Centry at the Gates of the Temple, to prevent ſuch Diſorders as might very well happen among ſuch a large Concourſe of People: For, by the Sequel of their Story it appears, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. that they depended upon *Pilate*, were ſubject to his Correction, and conſequently were not *Levites*, (as ſome imagine) but *Roman* Soldiers.

When *Daniel* was caſt into the Lions Den, it is ſaid, *That the King ſealed the Stone that was laid upon the Mouth of it, with his own Signet and with the Signet of his Lords, that the Purpoſe might not be changed concerning* Daniel, Chap. vi. 17. and from hence, ſome have ſuppoſed, that the Stone, wherewith our Lord's Sepulchre was cloſed, was ſealed with *Pilate*'s Signet, becauſe it was a Matter of publick Concern, and others have fancied; that it was farther ſecured by a great Chain, that went acroſs it, and that the Marks thereof were viſible in the venerable *Bede*'s Time.

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The ſeeming Oppoſition between what is recorded in xvith Chap. of *Mark*'s Goſpel, concerning ſome Circumſtances that happened at our Lord's Sepulchre, and the Narrations of the other *Evangeliſts*, made ſome of the Antients (as St. *Jerom* informs us) call in queſtion its Authority. But, as this Chapter was owned in the Times of *Irenæus*, and is quoted in the apoſtolick Conſtitutions, a ſmall Matter of diſtinguiſhing, added to what Dr. *Whitby* has done, by way of *Appendix* to it, will be a Means ſufficient to reconcile them. As to the Difference between the Account in St. *Luke*, who mentions the Viſion of Angels to *Mary Magdalen*, before her going to *Peter*, and that in St. *John*, who makes it ſubſequent to it; our learned *Hammond* is of Opinion, that this and ſeveral other Inconſiſtences may be adjuſted by this one Conſideration, That St. *Luke* writing from Notes, which he had collected from Eye-witneſſes, and not from his own Knowledge, obſerves not ſo exactly the Order of Time, where Things were done and ſpoken, but oftentimes in another Method, puts together Things of Affinity to one another, though not done or ſaid at the ſame Time. For ſo in Relation to the Tranſactions at our Lord's Sepulchre, he firſt ſets down all that concerns the Women together, and then that which concerns *Peter*; tho' Part of that, which concerned the Women, was done after what is mentioned of St. *Peter:* For the punctual Obſervation of Order (ſays our *Annotator*) is not neceſſary when Things themſelves are truly recited. The right Order of the Story he therefore ſuppoſes, is this, ——Mary *and the other Woman came to the Sepulchre, but found, that before their Coming, an Angel, with an Earthquake, had rolled away the Stone,*

and

and that the Body was gone. Upon this Mary *returns to* Peter *and* John; *tells them what she had seen; and they, to satisfy themselves of the Truth of her Report, haſten to the Sepulchre; and having found Things juſt as she told them, went away again. In the mean Time, the Women ſtay at the Sepulchre, wondering at this ſtrange Event; and then follows the Viſion of Angels, ſitting upon the Stone, and within the Sepulchre, ſpeaking to the Women, and aſſuring them of the Reality of* Chriſt's *Reſurrection; upon which they depart the ſecond Time, to tell the Apoſtles the News.*

Peter is here named, not as the Prince of the Apoſtles, but (as the Fathers ſay) for his Conſolation, and to take off the Scruple, which might lie upon his Spirits, whether, after his threefold Denial of his Maſter (with ſuch horrid Aggravations attending it) he had not forfeited his Right to be one of our Lord's Diſciples.

The Cuſtom of Interment among the *Jews* was, to roll the dead Body (as we read our Saviour's was, *John* xix. 39, 40.) up in Spices, which, tho' they preſerved it, in ſome Meaſure, from Corruption, by their glewy Nature, could not but make the Cloaths that were uſed with them, cling ſo cloſe to the Skin, as not to be drawn off without a great deal of Time and Difficulty. When therefore theſe Coverings were found regularly pulled off, wrapped up, and laid by; this plainly ſhews, that the Diſciples could have no Hand in ſtealing away their Maſter's Body. For, do Thieves, after they have rifled an Houſe, uſe to ſpend Time in putting Things in Order again? Or can it enter into any ſober Man's Thoughts, that they, who came by Stealth, and in Danger of their Lives (as the Diſciples certainly muſt have

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The Parable of y^e Lord who filled his House with Guests from y^e Highways and Hedge

have done upon ſuch an Adventure) ſhould thus ſtay, to awaken the Guard, and trifle away their Time, in ſuch hazardous and unneceſſary Nicеties. Had they been really engaged in this Affair, they certainly would have taken away the Body at once, without tarrying to unbind and undreſs it. And therefore the Condition, in which the Sepulchre was found, to every conſiderate Man, muſt be a ſufficient Confutation of that idle Pretence of the *Jews, His Diſciples came and ſtole him away.*

Various are the Senſes which Interpreters have been pleaſed to affix to the Reaſon, which our Lord aſſigns, for his rejecting this Woman's Homage and Embraces, *I am not yet Aſcended to my Father.* Some imagine that *Mary* ſtill retaining her Notions of a temporal Kingdom, concluded that our Lord was now riſen, on purpoſe to aſſume it, and retaining her Notions of a temporal Kingdom, concluded, that our Lord was now riſen, on purpoſe to aſſume it, and therefore fell down to adore him; but that he, willing to raiſe her Mind to ſpiritual and celeſtial Thoughts, gave her to underſtand, that; as yet it was not a proper Time for her to make her Addreſſes to him; becauſe he was not yet aſcended into Heaven, from whence he was to adminiſter his Kingdom, and to ſend down the Holy Ghoſt, in order to form a ſpiritual Communion between himſelf and his true Diſciples. Others ſuppoſe that Woman imagined, that our Lord was riſen again, in the Manner that *Lazarus* did, *viz.* to live upon Earth, as he had done before; and that therefore, to convince her of the contrary, he bid her not touch him, as a mortal Man, becauſe *I am not yet aſcended into Heaven,* but, in a ſhort Time ſhall; and that is

the Place where you are to pay me your Homage and Adorations. Others again ſay, that by a Figure, common enough among Grammarians, who frequently change one Tenſe for another, our Saviour's Words may denote, that he was not then about to aſcend, but to ſtay many Days upon Earth; ſo that *Mary* might have Space and Opportunity enough to pay her Adorations, and to ſatisfy herſelf in the Truth of his Reſurrection. But theſe, and ſeveral other Interpretations of the like kind, are far from being natural, and ſeem calculated on purpoſe to exclude the Notion of our Saviour's frequent Aſcenſions, during his Stay upon Earth, after his Reſurrection, which, in the Courſe of the ſubſequent Anſwers, we hope to evince to be true.

Some are of Opinion, that the Report, which the *Evangeliſt* ſpeaks of, as current among the *Jews*, that *the Diſciples ſtole away the Body by Night*, was not that our Lord's Diſciples came and ſtole him away, but that the Soldiers were corrupted by the High-prieſts to ſay ſo. This, indeed, gives a quite different Turn to the Thing, and is very favourable to the *Chriſtian* Cauſe; but yet, whoever conſiders the circular Letters, mentioned by *Juſtin Martyr*, which the Rulers in *Jeruſalem* ſent to the principal *Jews* all the World over, concerning the Fact, and the great Pains, which (as *Tertullian* informs us) they every where took to propagate it, together with the Care, which he, and the other antient Apologiſts employed to confute this ſenſeleſs, but malicious Lye, muſt needs be of a contrary Opinion, *viz.* that the Report was ſpread, not againſt the *Jewiſh* Rulers, but the *Chriſtian* Diſciples; and was not quite extinct, when St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel,

Goſpel, Ch. xxviii. 15. which was much about eight Years after *Chriſt*'s Death.

Let us now return to our Hiſtory.

On this ſame Day of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, as two of his Diſciples were taking a Walk, in the Afternoon, to a Town called *Emmaus*, and diſcourſing, as they went along, of what had lately happened; *Jeſus* joining himſelf to their Company, but they knew him not, and obſerving that they looked melancholy, he asked them the Subject of their Diſcourſe, and what it was that made them ſo diſconſolate? To which one of them replied, *That the Subject of their Diſcourſe, was too notorious even to eſcape the Knowledge of the greateſt Stranger; that it was concerning* Jeſus *of* Nazareth, *who, indeed, was a great Prophet; one whom they expected would have been the King, and Redeemer of* Iſrael; *but, to their great Diſappointment, had of late been delivered to Death, by their Rulers, and crucified. And, what is more aſtoniſhing, continued he, this very Day (which is the third ſince his Death) ſome Women of our Company, having been early at the Sepulchre, and not have finding the Body, ſurprized us with an Account, that they had ſeen a Viſion of Angels, who aſſured them that he was alive; which, in Part, was confirmed by ſome of our Men too, who went to the Sepulchre, and found it empty, but did not ſee him.*

Hereupon our Lord took Occaſion to reprove their Incredulity, and, from the Teſtimony of the Prophets, to convince them, that it was highly neceſſary the *Meſſiah* ſhould ſuffer Death, and riſe again, in order to a glorious Exaltation. As they drew near to the Village, where they in-

tended to ſpend that Night, *Jeſus* ſeemed as if he had farther to go; but they being unwilling to loſe his good Converſation, with ſome Intreaty, prevailed with him to ſtay. He did ſo: And, as he was ſitting at the Table with them, took Bread, bleſſed it, brake it, and delivered it to them, as he was wont to do; whereupon their Eyes were opened, and they knew him; but immediately he vaniſhed out of their Sight.

As ſoon as the two Diſciples had recovered from their Surprize, they haſtened to *Jeruſalem*, where the Apoſtles were met together; who, upon their Arrival, informed them, that their Lord was certainly riſen, and had appeared unto *Peter*; whilſt they, in their Turns, related what had happened to them, in the Country; how *Jeſus* had walked, and and converſed with them, and how they came to know by breaking of Bread. But, notwithſtanding all theſe Teſtimonies, ſeveral among them remained ſtill incredulous.

For Fear of the *Jews*, the Apoſtles had ſhut the Door, and were now ſit down to Supper in a private Room, late in the Evening, when our bleſſed Saviour came in, and ſaluted them; and, that they might not take him for a Spirit or Phantom, but for the very Perſon that was crucified in their Sight, he ſhewed them the Wounds in his Hands, his Feet, and his Side. Nay, that he might cure them of all Scruples and Doubtfulneſs, he eat a Piece of broiled Fiſh, and ſome Honey-comb before them all; and then, having a little upbraided them with their Unbelief, he gave them ſeveral great and weighty Inſtructions, a Power to underſtand the Scripture more perfectly, a Renovation of their Commiſſion to preach

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to all Nations, a Power and Authority to remit or retain Sins, a Communication of the bleſſed Spirit, by breathing on them, and a Promiſe of ſending him more plentifully (to enable them to be witneſſes of his Reſurrection) before they were to depart from *Jeruſalem*. And thus ended the Firſt-Day of the Week, which, in Honour of our bleſſed Saviour's Reſurrection, has, ever ſince, been kept as the Sabbath among *Chriſtians*.

At the above-mentioned Appearance of our bleſſed Saviour, all the Apoſtles, (except *Thomas*) were preſent; and, when they recounted to him every Particular, that had happened in his Abſcenſe, ſo far was he from giving his Aſſent to them, that he openly declared, that unleſs he had the utmoſt Evidence of his Senſes, by putting his Finger into the Holes in his Hands and Side, he would not believe a Word of what they told him. On the Sunday following therefore, when, in the ſame Place, they were all met together, with the Doors ſhut, for fear of the *Jews*, and *Thomas* was with them, *Jeſus* came, and ſtanding in the Midſt of them, ſaluted them, as formerly, with the Bleſſing of Peace. After that, turning to *Thomas*, he offered him the Satisfaction which he deſired, *viz.* the feeling his Hands and his Side, where the Nails and the Spear had pierced; which, when that Apoſtle had done, and upon Conviction, cried out in Tranſport, *My God, and my Lord!* our Saviour gave him to underſtand, that his believing, after ſuch a demonſtrative Evidence, was neither ſo praiſe-worthy or rewardable, as was the Faith of thoſe who had not the like Conviction.

After this Appearance to the Apoſtles, in a full Body,

Body, they all reſolved (purſuant to their Lord's Directions) to leave *Judæa*, and return into their own Province of *Galilie*. They had not been long there, before *Peter*, and ſeveral others of them went a fiſhing in the Lake or Sea of *Tiberias*; but, after much toiling all Night, they caught nothing. In the Morning, as they were making to Shore, a Perſon, unknown to them, being informed of their ill Succeſs, adviſed them to caſt their Net on the Right-Side of the Ship, which, when they done, they encloſed ſo great a Number of large Fiſhes, as made *John* ſuſpect, that the Perſon on Shore might poſſibly be their Maſter. This he no ſooner ſuggeſted to *Peter*, but *Peter*, impatient of Delay, throws on his Coat, and jumps into the Sea, and gets to Land, while the other Apoſtles had much ado to haul the Veſſel, and the Net, ſo loaded with Fiſhes, ſafe to Shoar. The Number of the Fiſhes was an hundred and fifty: But, what was more ſurprizing, at their Landing they found a Fire ready made, Fiſh broiling on it, and Bread ſtanding by. This notwithſtanding, our Lord ordered them to bring ſome of thoſe, which they had caught, and having asked them to ſit down with him, he not only diſtributed to them, but eat ſome of the Bread and Fiſh himſelf, to give them a ſtill farther Aſſurance of the Reality of his Reſurrection.

When Dinner was ended, he entered into Converſation with *Peter*; and having thrice demanded of him, if he loved him, and thrice received a Declaration that he did, he each Time injoined him to take care of the Flock, which he had committed to him. After this, in a figurative Speech, he

he ſignified to him, by what Manner of Death he was to glorify God, even by Crucifixion; but when *Peter* deſired to known the Fate of his favourite Apoſtle St. *John*, inſtead of gratifying his Curioſity he required him rather to attend to his own Concerns, and, as he was to reſemble him in the Manner of his Death, ſo to endeavour to imitate him in his Deportment under it, *If I will that he ſtay till I come, what is that to thee, follow thou me?* This Anſwer of our Saviour's, however, gave Occaſion to a Report among the reſt of the Diſciples, that *John* was never to die; but himſelf confuted that Opinion in his Goſpel, and by ſurviving the Fate of *Jeruſalem*, verified what our Saviour meant.

After this our Lord, having appointed a ſolemn Meeting of as many of his Diſciples, as could conveniently be got together, and named a certain Mountain in *Galilee*, for that Purpoſe, he there appeared, not only to the eleven Apoſtles, but to five hundred Brethren at once. Here he acquainted his Apoſtles, that all Power, both in Heaven and Earth, was given to him; commanded them to inſtruct all Nations, and to baptize them *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, and to preſs them to the Obſervation of all his Precepts; foretold them what mighty Signs any Wonders ſhould attend thoſe who were true Converts to his Religion; and promiſed them his daily Protection and Aſſiſtance, even unto the End of the World.

Forty Days was the Time pre-ordained for our Lord's Continuance upon Earth, after his Reſurrection. Theſe Days were now almoſt expired, when the Apoſtles (according as they were ordered) with ſome of their ſelect Friends, returned

to *Jeruſalem*, and there aſſembled themſelves in a private Place. Our bleſſed Saviour came to them; and, among other Things, relating to the Government of his Church, gave them particularly in Charge, that they ſhould not depart from *Jeruſalem*, until they had received that miraculous Effuſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, which he had promiſed, and would ſhortly ſend down upon them. This Effuſion of the Spirit the Apoſtles imagined might poſſibly be an Introduction to his glorious temporal Kingdom, which ſtill ran in their Heads; and therefore they asked him, whether he intended, at that Time, *to reſtore the Kingdom to* Iſrael? but he checked their Enquiry, and gave them to underſtand, that, after the Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt* upon them, they would have juſter Notions of theſe Matters, and be ſufficiently enabled to be the authentick Witneſſes of his Life and Actions, all the World over; and with theſe Words he led all the Company out of the City, to that Part of Mount *Olivet*, which was neareſt to *Bethany*, and there, as he was lifting up his Hands, and giving them his Benediction, while they continued all in an adoring Poſture, he was parted from them, gradually taken up in a Cloud, and carried triumphantly into Heaven, where he now ſitteth at the Right-Hand of God, *God bleſſed for ever.* Amen.

Again let us review the foregoing Paſſages.

Emmaus (which was afterwards made a City, and called *Nicopolis*) was, at this Time, a ſmall Village, about ſeven Miles diſtant from *Jeruſalem*, to the *Weſt*, where it is ſuppoſed, by *Bede* and others, that either *Cleophas*, or his Companion had an Houſe; which, by their importuning *Jeſus* to go with them, ſeems not improbable, becauſe

becauſe they could not propoſe to entertain him ſo commodiouſly, or hoſpitably in an Inn.

Whether it was, that after his Reſurrection, his Perſon was ſo conſiderably changed, that thoſe who knew him before, could not eaſily diſtinguiſh him; or that he appeared in an Habit quite different from what he uſed to wear, which, for ſome Time, might hinder them from recollecting who he was, or that he ſuſpended the Operation of their Senſes, that he might have a better Opportunity to inſtruct their Underſtandings; or that, by an extraordinary Power he with-held their Eyes from perceiving him; upon which, by removing of that Impediment, they immediately knew him. Any of theſe Cauſes will anſwer the Purpoſe better, than that we ſhould impute (as ſome do, their not knowing their Maſter, to their exceſſive Grief and Sorrow.

Two Diſciples going to *Emmaus*, were diſcourſing together upon the late extraordinary Events. He, who was the Spokeſman upon this Occaſion, is ſaid to be *Cleophas*, *Luke* xxiv. 18. who was the Brother of *Joſeph*, the Husband of the *Virgin Mary*, and ſo the reputed Uncle of *Chriſt*, whoſe Son *Simeon*, by the joint Conſent of the Apoſtles then living, was made Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, after St. *James*, as being the neareſt of Kin to our Saviour.

Jeſus ſeemed willing to go farther; and ſo very probably would have done, had not the Diſciples preſſed him to ſtay with them: But, ſuppoſing he had been reſolved to abide with them, and was minded to try the Temper of his Fellow-Travellers, we cannot from hence charge him either with Diſſimulation or Deceit; becauſe, though our Words ought to be the certain Inter-

preters of our Thoughts, and are therefore not to be imployed ſo, as to deceive any, yet walking hath no certain Signification, nor was it ever inſtituted to be an Indication of the Mind.

The original Word in St. *Luke*, which our Tranſlation has rendered *they conſtrained him*, in Terms, literal indeed, ſeems in this Place a little two harſh; becauſe it is very improbable (eſpecially if we conſider the Context) that theſe two Diſciples ſhould offer any Force or Violence to *Jeſus* to make him go with them.

Origen is of Opinion, that our bleſſed Lord, for the forty Days, that he was upon Earth after his Reſurrection, could make himſelf viſible or invible, when, and to whom he pleaſed. It is not to be doubted, indeed but that he had the ſame Body that was depoſited in the Grave; but then, what the Powers of a raiſed and glorified Body (eſpecially when in Conjunction with the Deity) are, we cannot tell; only we may infer, that our Saviour could, at leaſt with the ſame Facility, diſappear to his Diſciples now, as he did to the *Jews*, when they were about to ſtone him, *John* viii. 53. which, it is generally ſuppoſed he did, by the Medium of a Cloud caſt over his Body.

He eat a piece of broiled Fleſh, not to ſatisfy any Hunger, that his Body could ſuffer after its Reſurrection, but to prove to them that his Body was truly raiſed, and himſelf was really preſent. And, ſince it cannot be ſuppoſed, that *Chriſt*, in this Action, deſigned any Illuſion, it follows from his very eating, that his Body had thoſe Parts by which we chew our Meat, and withal a Stomach to receive it.

Our Saviour gave his Diſciples a Power to underſtand the Scriptures more perfectly; this the *Evange-*

Evangeliſt tells us, *Chriſt* did by *opening their Minds*, Luke xxiv. 45, for, 'tis one Thing, to open the Scriptures themſelves, or to explain them; and another to open their Underſtanding, to perceive them; and *Chriſt*, very probably, did the latter, by giving them now ſome firſt Fruits of that Spirit of Prophecy, which fell more plentifully on them at the Day of *Pentecoſt*.

Tho' the *Greek* Word, tranſlated *Nation*, does, in ſome particular Places, ſignify the Tribes and Families of the *Jews*; yet this we are to obſerve, that wherever Mention is made of preaching the Goſpel, in order to gain Converts to the *Chriſtian* Faith, the Word relates primarily, to the ſeveral Parts of *Judea*, and to the *Jews*, whereſoever they are, in their Diſperſions abroad; then ſecondarily, to the *Gentiles* mingled with the *Jews*; and finally, to the whole *Gentile* World, when, upon the *Jews* rejecting the Goſpel, the Apoſtles were forced to depart from them; for ſuch the Tenor of their Commiſſion, and ſuch their conſtant Practice was. *It was neceſſary* (ſay *Paul* and *Barnabas* to the *Jews*) *that the Word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you* (which refers, I ſuppoſe, to ſome Precept of *Chriſt* which made it neceſſary) *but ſeeing ye have put it from you, lo, we turn to the* Gentiles, *Acts* xiii. 46.

As *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection was a Matter of Fact, it muſt be proved by the Teſtimony of Eye-witneſſes, who, if they be honeſt Men, and ſuffer the greateſt Prejudices in their Fortunes, Reputation and Life, for this Teſtimony, give us the greater Reaſon to believe it. For their Honeſty will not ſuffer them, upon any Account whatever, to deviate from the Truth; their Intereſt

and Prudence will not permit them (without any Neceſſity laid upon them) to teſtify a Falſhood, much more the groſſeſt Falſhood, to their utmoſt Damage, and without any Proſpect of Advantage; and then, if they confirm this their Teſtimony, by all Kinds of Signs, Miracles and wondrous Powers, exerciſed by themſelves, and others who embraced their Teſtimony; and if this be done in all Places, and on all Perſons, for a whole Age or Ages; this makes it a Thing impoſſible, that they ſhould thus atteſt a Lye: And therefore our Lord bids the Apoſtles ſtay at *Jeruſalem*, till they were thus empowered, by Virtue from on High, to confirm this Teſtimony.

The *Jewiſh* Sabbath was, at firſt, inſtituted, not barely in Commemoration of God's Creating the World, but (as there is another Reaſon ſubjoined) in Memory of their Deliverance from the *Egyptian* Bondage: *For remember that thou waſt a Servant in the Land of* Egypt, *therefore the Lord thy God commandeth thee to keep the Sabbath-day*, Deut. v. 15. Now this Bondage of theirs was an Emblem of our Captivity under Sin, and their Deliverance a Type of our ſpiritual Redemption. When therefore our Redemption was accompliſhed, it became proper that the old *Jewiſh* Sabbath, *i. e.* the Seventh-day, ſhould be paſſed over, and the firſt made Choice of, to be honoured with two ſuch glorious Miracles, as the Reſurrection of our bleſſed Lord from the Dead, and the coming of the *Holy Ghoſt* from Heaven. After this, indeed, we find the Apoſtles frequenting the *Synagogue* on the *Jewiſh* Sabbath; but from the Time of their Lord's Reſurrection, they never did it (as before) according to the Command-

ment,

ment, but according to Cuſtom, or as the Manner was, *Acts* xvii. 6. and therefore we have Reaſon to believe, that from the very firſt, they looked upon the antient Sabbath ſuperſeded by this other, which from the Beginning they called *the Lord's Day*; and from the Beginning employ'd in Acts of religious Worſhip: To which Purpoſe we find *Ignatius* exhorting *Chriſtians* not to baptize with the *Jews*, but to live according to the Lord's Day, in which our Life aroſe with him.

What might be the Occaſion of the Apoſtle *Thomas*'s Abſence, is variouſly conjectued. Some are of Opinion, that as all fled from their Maſter, when he was apprehended in the Garden, they did not ſo ſoon aſſemble again, but by Degrees dropped in, one by one, as they recovered from their Fright; and that therefore, at this Time, *Thomas* was not returned to the Company. But others, from the natural Temper of this Apoſtle (as he appears from the Scripture Paſſages, wherein he is concerned, to be very ſcrupulous, and hard of Belief) rather think, that taking Offence at the Apoſtles eaſy Credulity, (as he deemed it) and looking upon all that the Women from the Sepulchre, and the two Diſciples from *Emmaus* had ſaid, as ſo many idle Tales, he left the Company, in pure Diſguſt, not long before our Saviour came in.

The Manner by which the Apoſtle *Thomas* might bring himſelf to the Reſolution, that he would believe nothing but from the Evidence of his Senſes, might poſſibly be by ſome ſuch Arguments, as theſe, —— Jeſus *of* Nazareth *was put to death upon the Croſs; and being dead, was laid and ſealed up in a Sepulchre, which was ſtrictly watched*

watched by a Guard of Soldiers: But I am told, and required to believe, that notwithſtanding all this, he is riſen, and is indeed alive. Now ſurely, Things ſuitable to the ſtated Courſe of Nature, ſhould be believed, before ſuch as are quite beſide it; and for a Man to return to Life, is preternatural, but that thoſe, who report this, may be miſtaken, is very natural and uſual. Dead I ſaw him; but that he is riſen, I only hear. In what I ſee with mine own Eyes, I cannot eaſily be deceived; but in what I only hear, I may, and often am. Here being two Things then propoſed to my Belief, my Reaſon ſuggeſts to me, that I ought to chuſe that which is more credible; but it ſeems more credible, that a ſmall Number of Witneſſes (frightened and diſturbed as they are) ſhould be deceived or (as honeſt as once they were) may conſpire to deceive me, than that one ſhould riſe from the Dead; and therefore, except, *&c.*

My *God, and my Lord!* This is a noble Confeſſion of the Apoſtle's Faith; wherein he not only recognizes *Jeſus* for the *Meſſiah*, the very ſame Lord to whom he had been a Servant and Companion, during the Space of his Miniſtry, but owns likewiſe, and proclaims his divine Nature. For the original here is in Terms ſo ſtrict, and with ſuch an Addition of the *Greek* Article, as the very *Hereticks* and Enemies to Truth confeſs to be the Character of the Word *God*, when taken in its moſt proper Senſe, and intended of the true God only. Nor can the Words (if put for a Note of Admiration only) be of Force ſufficient to expreſs any Conviction in *Thomas*; becauſe Expreſſions of Wonder, tho' they properly ſpeak Aſtoniſhment and Surprize, do not always imply

imply Belief, and may therefore import the the Strangeneſs, without the Truth of the Thing; whereas, our Saviour, in his Anſwer to *Thomas*, *becauſe thou haſt ſeen, thou haſt believed*, John xx. 29. accepts this as a full and ſufficient Declaration of his Aſſent; and therefore to make it ſuch, we muſt allow that *Paraphraſe*, which ſome antient Tranſlations ſupply it with, by reading, *Thou art my Lord, thou art my God.*

The Apoſtles as ſuch, had nothing to do, until the *Holy Ghoſt* ſhould deſcend upon them, and among the *Jews* it was accounted a Diſgrace to be idle. Since fiſhing therefore was the ordinary Occupation of ſeveral of them, in this intermediate Time, they thought it the beſt Way to betake themſelves to it; and that not only to keep themſelves imployed, but to ſupply their own Want of Neceſſaries likewiſe, until they ſhould have a proper Call to the Miniſtry; when in all Probability, they gave over the Labours of their ſecular Employs, and devoted themſelves intirely to that Work.

By the Apoſtles not knowing our Saviour, one would think, that our bleſſed Lord, after his Reſurrection, was not a little changed in his outward Appearance, ſince his Apoſtles (notwithſtanding more Interviews than one) could not ſo readily diſtinguiſh him, either by his Voice or Looks. Upon this Occaſion, however, he ſeems, by this Queſtion, *John* xxi. 5. to perſonate one, who might be come to buy ſome Fiſh of them, and under that Guiſe (whilſt they were buſy and employed) might more eaſily paſs upon them for a Stranger.

Peter hearing that the Lord was on Shore, throws on his Coat, and jumps into the Sea, to

get the ſooner to him. The Text tells us, that he was naked before; but what is called naked, ſignifies only to have Part of the Body uncovered, or to be without a Gown or upper Garment, according to the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern* People, and of the *Romans*, who, when they went Abroad, or made any public Appearance, wore a long upper Garment, called in *Latin*, *Toga*. Of this Kind was what the Evangeliſt calls a Fiſher's Coat: and from hence it ſeems pretty plain, that *Peter* did not ſwim (as 'tis uſually thought) but wade to Land; ſince, if Decency was the Motive of putting on his Coat, he could not have preſerved that Decency, had he come dripping wet (as he muſt have been, upon the Suppoſition of his ſwimming) into his Maſter's Preſence.

The Fire, Fiſh and Bread on the Shore were all created, and produced by *Chriſt* out of nothing, to evidence, at this Time, his divine Power; but leſt there ſhould be thought any Deluſion in theſe, he ordered likewiſe ſome of the other, that were juſt then taken, to be dreſſed; and that they might not take him for an Apparition only, he invited them to dine with him. As therefore by the Miracle of creating, and miraculouſly catching the Fiſhes, he proved himſelf to be a God, ſo by his preſent eating of the Fiſh, he evidenced himſelf to be a Man, and conſequently teaches us, that our exalted High-prieſt continues our Kinſman in Heaven.

'Tis not indeed ſaid expreſly, that at this Time he did eat; but ſince St. *Peter* tells, that *they did eat and drink with him, after he roſe from the Dead*, Acts x. 41. and St. *Luke* teſtifies, that, on another Occaſion, *he did eat before them*, Chap. xxiv. 42, 43. as he did then for the Confirmation

of

S^t. MATTHEW *the Evangelist, who wrote the Gospel that goes under his Name.*

of his Reſurrection, 'tis hardly to be doubted, but that he did it now for the ſame End.

Our Saviour's Words to St. *Peter* are, Simon, *Son of* Jonas, *loveſt thou me more than theſe*, John xxi. 15. More than theſe what? Some will tell us, that our Saviour here pointing at the Nets and Fiſhing-boats, demanded of *Peter* whether he loved him, and his Service, better than his ordinary Employment and Occupation; but this is a forced and jejune Expoſition. The Apoſtle, to be ſure, before our Lord's being taken into Cuſtody, had been very liberal in his Profeſſions of Love to him. He had promiſed to go with him to Priſon and to Death; and to ſhew how much he ſurpaſſed the Reſt of his Brethren, *tho' all ſhould be offended becauſe of thee*, ſays he, *yet will not I*, Matt. xxvi. 33 and yet, upon the Approach of the firſt Danger, he forgot all his Promiſes, and behaved more inglorioufly than the Reſt. 'Tis in Alluſion therefore to this, that our Lord begins this Diſcourſe with *Peter*; that he calls to his Mind his former Speeches, and contrary Performances; and, by thrice repeating this Queſtion, *Peter, loveſt thou me?* in reſpect of his three Denials; and, at firſt, adding the Words, *more than theſe*, in regard to his magnifying his Love, above all others, he now engages him, by the Senſe and Conſideration of his Fall, to a better Diſcharge, and a more conſtant Expreſſion of his Love, in converting Men to the Faith of *Chriſt*.

The Occaſion of St. *Peter*'s being put to Death, according to the Prediction of our Saviour, is generally reported to be, —— That he, aſſiſted by St. *Paul*, had here alſo confounded the diabolical Illuſions of *Simon Magus*: Whereupon *Nero*, who

was a Favourer of Magicians, being provoked (or as others think, to ingratiate himſelf with the People of *Rome*, after firing their City) gave Orders for his Execution, which the *Prefects* (in the Emperor's Abſence) took Care to ſee executed upon him and St. *Paul*, at the ſame Time. The latter, as a Denizen, was beheaded with a Sword, but St. *Peter*, who had no Claim to the like Privilege, was ſentenced to Crucifixion. This, and the Torments preparatory to it, he underwent with marvellous Patience; and, as a Mark of his Humility, requeſted, and obtained to have his Body faſtened to the Croſs, with his Head downward, judging it too great an Honour to ſuffer in the ſame Manner and Poſture that his Lord had done.

If I will that he ſtay till I come, i. e. come in Judgment, to take Vengeance on the *Jews*. For tho' there are but two perſonal Advents, mentioned in Scripture; the firſt, when our Lord came into the World to redeem it, and the ſecond, when he ſhall return again to judge it; yet this is no Objection againſt his intermediate Advent, which was not perſonal by any viſible Deſcent of his from Heaven, but virtual, and effected by his ſending the *Roman* Army againſt the *Jews*, and giving Signs from Heaven, and in the Clouds, of their approaching Ruin. So that the Senſe of our Saviour's Words is,——*If my Pleaſure is, that he live till the Diſſolution of the* Jewiſh *State:* And accordingly we find, that tho' *Peter* was put to death under *Nero*, yet St. *John* continued even to the Time of *Trajan*'s Reign, above an hundred Years after our Saviour's Birth, and ſo thirty Years after that this Coming of his was paſt.

This

This Anſwer of our Saviour occaſioned a Report among the Diſciples, that *John* ſhould never die, becauſe the *Chriſtians*, at that Time, by the Coming of *Chriſt*, underſtood the laſt Judgment; whereas our Saviour intended it of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which, in effect, was a full Emblem of the final Diſſolution of all Things.

The Mountain, which our Saviour appointed to meet his Diſciples upon, is generally ſuppoſed to be *Tabor*, the Place where our Lord was tranſfigured; tho' ſome ſuppoſe it to be one that ſtood nearer the Lake of *Tiberias*.

When our Saviour foretold what mighty Signs and Wonders ſhould attend the true Converts of his Religion, we are not to ſuppoſe that he promiſed the Gift of Miracles to every *Chriſtian* Convert, ſince this would have made Miracles (which ſhould only be employed on important Occaſions, where the Glory of God, or the Good of Mankind is concerned) too common, and conſequently of no Validity at all. So that this Promiſe, though expreſſed in general Terms, muſt neceſſarily be to the Apoſtles, and apoſtolick Men. Of *their caſting out Devils, healing Diſeaſes, and ſpeaking with new Tongues*, we have Inſtances almoſt innumerable. And from St. *Paul* it appears, that this Promiſe was literally fulfilled, when, after a Viper had faſtened upon his Hand, for ſome Time, he ſhook it off into the Fire, without receiving any Hurt, *Acts* xxviii. 5. and to the drinking of deadly Poiſons, we have it recorded by *Papias* of *Barſabas*, ſurnamed the *Juſt*; by *Ado*, in his *Martyrology* of the *Cæcilian* Soldier; and by *Gregory* of *Tours*; of *Sabinus* Biſhop of *Canoſa*; that they three did this without any Miſ-

chief to themſelves. But as Miracles of this Kind were more liable to exceptions, than ſuch as were performed upon Unbelievers, (Men being apt to think, that there might be ſome Antidotes againſt the Venom of theſe Beaſts, or the pernicious Effects of theſe Draughts) it may be owned, that Providence thought fit to be more ſparing in affording theſe.

Lo, I am with you always to the End of the World, Matt. xxviii. 20. i. e. *I am, and will be with you, and your Succeſſors, lawfully called by my Power and Authority, and by the Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit; I will be with you, to uphold my Ordinance, to protect, encourage, and reward you, and all your Succeſſors, in the faithful Diſcharge of your Truſt; and this not for a Day, a Year, or an Age, but even to the End and Conſummation of all Ages.* From whence we may learn, that the Miniſtry of the Word, and Adminiſtration of the Sacraments are a ſtanding and perpetual Ordinance, to continue in the *Chriſtian* Church, throughout all Ages; and that all the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt*, in what Part of the World ſoever God ſhall caſt their Lot, and in what Time ſoever they ſhall happen to live, may comfortably expect *Chriſt*'s gracious Preſence with their Perſons, and his Bleſſing upon their Labours.

Of all Places the Apoſtles would leaſt of all have choſen *Jeruſalem* to tarry in, had not our Lord poſitively commanded it there. For *Jeruſalem* was now a juſtly abhorred and deteſted Place, reeking freſh with the Blood of the holy and innocent *Jeſus*; and yet *Jeruſalem* is the Place, choſen by *Chriſt*, for the pouring forth of Holy Spirit upon his Apoſtles, becauſe there was the greateſt Company

pany of Spectators to behold this noble Work, and to be wrought upon by it; and becauſe there had been the Scenes of his greateſt Humiliation, and therefore, there he was minded to ſhew forth his Power and Glory.

The Reaſons, aſſignable for this wonderful Diſpenſation, the Effuſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, are, *1ſt*, To enable them to be powerful Witneſſes of our Lord's Reſurrection, *Luke* xxiv. 48. and conſequently, that he was the true *Meſſiah*, or the Prophet, who was to come into the World, and was to be the Saviour of it: And therefore St. *Peter* ſpeaks thus to the *Jews*, *Ye have killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raiſed from the Dead, of which we are Witneſſes*, Acts iii. 15. *2dly*, To enable them to give an exact Account (as far as divine Wiſdom ſaw it neceſſary) of what our Saviour did, and taught; and therefore himſelf tells them, that *the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, ſhould teſtify of him, and bring all thoſe Things to their Remembrance, which he had ſaid unto them*, John xv. 26. xiv. 26. and, *3dly*, To make them *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament*, *i. e.* able to acquaint *Chriſtians* with all ſaving Truths, and to teach them all Things, that he had commanded to be obſerved, throughout all the Ages of the Church; and upon the Strength of this Promiſe, all *Chriſtians*, in all Ages, have believed, that the Apoſtles and Writers of the *New Teſtament*, both ſpake and wrote as they were moved, or directed by the Spirit of God, and received thoſe Doctrines they taught, or indited, *not as the Word of Men, but, as they were in Truth, the Word of God*, 1 Theſ. ii. 13.

Thus the Apoſtles preached in the moſt conſiderable Cities of the then-known World; as at *Antioch*,

Antioch, *Alexandria*, and even at *Rome* itſelf, as well as at *Jeruſalem*, and *Samaria*. They taught at *Athens*, and *Corinth*, and throughout all *Greece*, in ſuch Towns as were moſt learned, moſt corrupt, and moſt idolatrous. It was in the Preſence of all Nations, of *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, of the Learned and the Ignorant, of *Jews* and *Romans*, of Princes and their People, that the Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt* gave Witneſs of the Wonders they had *ſeen with their Eyes*, *heard with their Ears*, *and touched with their Hands*, and particularly of their Lord's Reſurrection: Which Teſtimony they ſupported, without any Intereſt, and againſt all the Reaſons of human Prudence, even to their laſt Breath, and ſealed it with their Blood. Such was the Eſtabliſhment of *Chriſtianity!*

By *Chriſt*'s lifting up his Hands, and giving them his Benediction, we learn, that the Cuſtom among the *Jews* was, to give the Benediction to a good Number, or Congregation of People, with an Elevation, and Extenſion of the Hands, as appears from the Practice of *Aaron*, *Lev.* ix. 22. But to any particular Perſon, the Bleſſing was given with the Impoſition of Hands, as the Example of *Jacob*, with regard to *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, plainly ſhews, *Gen.* xlviii. 14.

The Aſcenſion of *Chriſt* into Heaven muſt be underſtood of his *human* Nature only, becauſe the *divine* Nature fills all Places, both in Heaven and Earth, and is, at all Times, incapable of that, which we properly call *Motion*. The ſame Body of *Chriſt*, therefore which was born, and ſuffered, and died, was actually carried up thither; and ſo our Saviour's Aſcenſion was no imaginary and figurative, but a real, proper, and bodily Aſcent into

into Heaven, and that, in the moſt elevated Part, and nobleſt Signification, that this Word, at any Time does, or can poſſibly admit.

Sitting at the Right-hand of God, is one of thoſe Expreſſions, wherein the *Holy Ghoſt* condeſcends to our Capacity, by attributing to God the Parts, and Geſture of an human Body. The Hand is the chief Inſtrument of exerting our Strength, and therefore often uſed to denote the Power of God. The Right-hand is the uſual Place of Honour and Reſpect, and therefore this denotes the higheſt Dignity. Sitting, in like manner intimates a State of Eaſe and Reſt, and is properly the Poſture of thoſe, that are in Power and Authority, of Kings upon their Thrones, and Magiſtrates in Courts of Juſtice; and therefore *Chriſt's ſitting at God's Right-hand* implies thus much,——That the ſame Bliſs, Glory, and Power, which, as the Son of God, he did, before his Incarnation, enjoy with his Father from all Eternity, his human Nature is now made Partaker of, in the higheſt Heavens. That this *God-Man* is inveſted with an abſolute Authority, and boundleſs Dominion, and does now, in *both* Natures, *rule*, as he ſhall one Day *judge*, the whole World; and, till that Day come, it is the Duty of us, and all Mankind, to reverence and obey, to truſt in, and pray to him, as our only Head and King, our rightful and univerſal Lord.

DISSER-

DISSERTATION I.

Objections: *Answered, by shewing, why our Lord called himself the* Son of Man; *and yet declares himself the* Son of God: *In what Sense he is inferior to the Father: In what Sense he seems to be ignorant of some future Events: To have all Power given him: And to have been exceeding sorrowful: From whence this Sorrow and other Infirmities did arise, various Opinions: Why God would not discharge Mankind without his dying for them. Of* Judas's *Sin: Of St.* Peter's *Crime: Of the penitent Thief: The Reality of the Darkness at our Lord's Crucifixion: Infant-Baptism in use among the* Jews: *Why our Lord did not appear publickly, after his Resurrection,* &c.

THE *Objections* raised against the preceding History, are; —— "Surely it must be deemed some Argument against this *Divinity* of *Jesus*, that, on several Occasions, we find him disclaiming all Pretensions to it; owning himself to be no more than *the Son of Man*; acknowledging an Inferiority between him and the only true God; and, in some of the momentous Passages of his Life, discovering himself to be no more than *Man*, a Man of the like Passions and Infirmities with us; but, in many Cases, far short of that Bravery and Fortitude of Mind, which has been conspicuous in some *Heathen Sages*.

The *hypoſtatical Union*, ſo much talked of (had there been any Reality in it) muſt have certainly given *Jeſus* a Fore-knowledge of all Events, tho' never ſo contingent, never ſo uncertain; and yet we find him declaring, that *of that Day and Hour* (*viz.* either of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* or his *Advent* to the general *Judgment*) *knoweth no Man, neither the Angels, which are in Heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.*

'Tis a known Attribute of God, that, as he is a ſelf-exiſtent and independant Being, the Power, which he has, he had from all Eternity, inherent in himſelf, and derived from none other; but the Caſe muſt have been quite otherwiſe with *Jeſus*, as appears by his coming to his Apoſtles, and, with great Joy, telling them, that *all Power was given to him in Heaven, and Earth:* For, when was it given? Not till after his Reſurrection, not until *had been obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs, for which God highly exalted him*; and therefore this is no obſcure Intimation, that he had no Share of this divine Power committed to him before.

The moſt obvious Notion we have of a *Deity* reſiding in *human* Nature, is, that the Perſon, vouchſafed that Dignity, ſhould be (if not exempt from all kind of Miſeries) enabled at leaſt to bear them without Anxiety: But what became of the Power of this *hypoſtatical Union*, when we find our Lord *filled with Fear and Anguiſh*, and, in the utmoſt Conſternation of Mind, telling his three Apoſtles (whom he deſired to watch with him) that *his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death:* When we find him in the Garden, *praying with ſuch ſtrong Cries and Tears*, and in

ſuch an Agony both of Soul and Body, that *his Sweat was like great Drops of Blood, falling down to the Ground:* And, above all, when we find him reduced to ſuch Extremity, that an Angel was detached from Heaven to ſupport and ſtrengthen him; which certainly there would have been no Occaſion for, *had the Fulneſs of the Godhead* (of much ſuperior Efficacy, one would think, in this Caſe, than any created Angel) *dwelt in him bodily.*

Where was this *hypoſtatical Union*, we may ask, when our Lord, as he was hanging on the Croſs, ſadly complained, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* And much more may we ask, where it was when he lay buried in the Grave, a pale, ſenſeleſs Corpſe, wrapped in Linnen-cloaths, and embalmed with Spices? 'Tis the Union of the Soul, we know, that prevents the Death of the Body, and much more muſt our Lord's Death have been prevented by ſuch a Conjunction of the divine Nature, unleſs we can ſuppoſe that Nature, at any Time, *torpid*, and unactive, which, in a divine Principle, is hardly within the Compaſs of Suppoſition.

However, ſince our Saviour was to ſuffer, and for this Purpoſe came into the World, that he might *taſte Death for every Man*, how is it, that he happened to be more troubled at the Apprehenſion of it, than was *Socrates*, and many other Philoſophers of old, who had learned *not to be much afflicted with Calamities*, and ſuffered Torments with an undaunted Courage. He certainly knew what God had decreed, and himſelf had conſented to, before his Incarnation; and therefore, when he came to the Point, for what Reaſon was it, that he altered his Purpoſe, and deſired of his Father a Removal of the bitter Cup?

If

If the Ingredients of it were ſo very bitter, we cannot ſee what Occaſion there was for his drinking it at all, or why he ſhould doubt of the Poſſibility of its paſſing from him. For might not God forgive the Sins of Mankind without any ſuch penal Exactions? Or, if a Sacrifice was to be offered, might not the Death of a common Man, admitted as a *publick Repreſentative*, have done as well? When the Love of God would have roſe, in Proportion to the Lowneſs of the Satisfaction, he accepted, why ſhould he be at the Expence of parting with his only Son, and of redeeming us with the *Blood Royal* of Heaven?

But, after all, it is much to be queſtioned, whether we are really redeemed or no. For, even allowing, that our Proxy, *Chriſt Jeſus*, was the Son of God, yet were not his Sufferings equivalent to the Sins of Mankind, foraſmuch as the Death which he underwent was only *temporal*, whereas the Puniſhment, which our Sins deſerved, and we, in our Perſons, ſhould have ſuffered for them, was Death *eternal*.

If the Satisfaction however, hereby given to the divine Juſtice, was ſufficient and compleat, we ought not to make ſuch an heavy Outcry againſt *Judas*, for being an Inſtrument in this Tranſaction, eſpecially ſince what he did he was in a manner compelled to do.

We read of this Fact of his in a Prophecy, as high as the *Pſalmiſt*, who not only points out the Thing, but likewiſe the Perſon that was to do it; from whence it muſt follow, that this Fact muſt likewiſe have been pre-ordained, and made neceſſary to come to paſs, by the Fate of a Decree; and if he was neceſſitated by the Force of an irreſiſtible

ſiſtible Decree, wherein was he to be blamed for the doing it; ſince where there is a Fatality in acting, there can be no Choice; and where there is no Choice, there can be no Guilt?

But even ſuppoſing that *Judas* was guilty of an heinous Offence in betraying his Maſter, yet we cannot but think, that St. *Peter* was every whit as culpable *in denying him*, in denying him *three Times*, with the ſad Formality of repeated Oaths and Imprecations; and yet it would make one wonder, why the one's Repentance was accepted merely *for weeping* a little as the Remembrance of his Offence, when the other's deep Sorrow and Remorſe for his Crime; his returning the *Wages of Iniquity* openly; his publick Declaration of our Saviour's Innocence, owning his Baſeneſs, and taking the whole Shame of his Fault upon himſelf; met with no Grace, but ended in his everlaſting Perdition.

Well was it for the penitent Thief, that he had better Fate, whoſe Repentance, though begun upon the Croſs, and even after he had joined in reviling our Saviour, was immediately rewarded with a glorious Reception into *Paradiſe*. And this may teach us, that, whatever ſome may talk of the Invalidity of a late Death-bed Repentance, God is diſpoſed to receive the greateſt Sinners into the Arms of his Mercy (upon the Suppoſition that their Contrition be ſincere) even though they be at their laſt Gaſp.

But, though we are obliged to St. *Luke* for this comfortable Account of the penitent Thief, yet we cannot but acknowledge, that St. *Matthew* has committed an egregious Bluder, when, in relation to the *thirty Pieces of Silver*, that were given for

for our Saviour's Blood, inſtead of *Zechariah*, in whom alone the Prophecy is to be found, he cites *Jeremiah*, who has not one Word concerning the whole Matter.

But a Miſquotation may be eaſily excuſed, were they not chargable with a Miſrepreſentation of Facts; as they certainly are, (*d*) when they talk of a *total Eclipſe* of the Sun, at the Time of our *Lord*'s Crucifixion, for *whole three Hours together*; when 'tis confeſſed, that the Sun and Moon were in no Conjunction then, and (even if they had been ſo) a Darkneſs of ſo long Continuance, in any Eclipſe whatever, is known to be contrary to the Law of Nature: As they certainly are, when they reſolve the Infidelity of God's People, not into the Perverſeneſs of their own Wills, but either into the divine Predictions, or a judicial Blindneſs, and Obduration brought upon them: When they introduce our Lord, with no more than a *Whip* in his Hand, *driving all the Buyers and ſellers out of the Temple*; curſing the poor *Fig-tree*, for having *nothing but Leaves upon it*, when (according to their own Acknowledgment) *the Time of Figs was not yet*; and (what is more ſtill) curſing the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, and giving them ſuch hard Names, when he could not but know, that this was a groſs Violation of his great Precept of *loving one another*; though how he comes to call it *a new Commandment*, we cannot well conceive, ſince it is manifeſtly as old as *Moſes*, in whoſe Law 'tis expreſly ſaid, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf: I am the Lord.*

Whatever our Saviour might mean by *the Abomination of Deſolation* (ſpoken of by *Daniel* the Prophet) *ſtanding in the holy Place*, which has occaſioned

caſioned no ſmall Perplexity to Interpreters; 'tis certain, that, in the Commiſſion which he gives his Apoſtles, he has furuiſhed the *Antipædo-baptiſts* with an Argument, that will not eaſily be wreſted from them; when he bids them *go, and teach all Nations, before they baptize them*; and that the *Romaniſts* have too much to ſay for themſelves, in Behalf of *the real Preſence*, when, after the Conſecration of the Elements, *he calls the Bread his Body*, and *the Wine his Blood*, which, happy had it been for *Chriſtendom*, had he expreſſed it in more explicit Terms.

Nay, happy had it been for the *Chriſtian* Cauſe in general, if the Proof of his *Reſurrection* had been made a little more publick and convincing. For, whatever may be ſaid in Apology for St. *Thomas*'s Incredulity (which if it was cauſeleſs, was certainly very culpable) it cannot be doubted, but that, had our Lord appeared perſonally to the High-prieſts and Rulers, after he was riſen; made an open and triumphant Entry into *Jeruſalem*; and frequented the Temple, and other Places of publick Concourſe, that every Eye might ſee him, and receive full Conviction, for the Time that he abode upon Earth; it cannot be doubted, I ſay, but that, in this Method, he would have given the World fuller Satisfaction, than in remitting us to the Teſtimony of his Apoſtles, who were all his own Creatures, and, conſequently, Evidences, againſt whom we may make a juſt Exception."

" There are two Points more, that, in this " Part of the ſacred Hiſtory, we have Reaſon to " call in Queſtion, and theſe are, the *Materiality* " of our Lord's *Reſurrection-body*, and the *Reality* " of his *Aſcenſion* into Heaven. One known Pro-

" perty

" perty of a Body is, that it cannot penetrate " through Matter, *without either cutting it, or " being cut,* as *Cyril* of *Alexandria* ſpeaks; and " therefore if *Jeſus,* at his Reſurrection, aſſumed " the ſame Body, that died on the Croſs, and was " laid in the Sepulchre, how come we to read, " that, *on the firſt Day of the Week, when the " Doors were ſhut, he came into his Diſciples,* " more than once, *and ſtood in the midſt of them.* " If his Body, at this Time, was real Fleſh and " Blood, it could never have penetrated through " a more ſolid Subſtance than itſelf; and there- " fore we have Reaſon to preſume, that it was no " more than a light aerial Body, that could paſs " through any Crack, or Key-hole, and appear " or diſappear as it pleaſed.

" And, in like Manner, when we read in the " ſame *Evangeliſt, Touch me not* (as our Saviour " ſays to *Mary Magdalen*) *for I am not yet aſ- " cended to my Father; but go to my Brethren, and " ſay to them, I aſcend to my Father, and your " Father, to my God, and your God*; upon the " Suppoſition that his Body was material, we muſt " from theſe Words infer, that he aſcended in- " ſtantly after his Reſurrection, and, as the Joys " of Heaven would not fail to detain him, we " muſt from hence conclude, that his ſeeming " Aſcent from the Mount *Olivet* afterwards, was " performed by ſome airy Form or other, which " he appointed to perſonate him upon this Oc- " caſion." To anſwer theſe Objections,

St. *Paul,* in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians,* argues, from the Majeſty of *Chriſt*'s divine Nature, to the Greatneſs of his Condeſcenſion in becoming the Son of Man, *who being in the Form of God*

(as

(as he expreſſes it) *thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, but made himſelf of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeneſs of Man, and being found in the Faſhion of a Man, he humbled a himſelf, and became obedient unto Death.* In this State of Humiliation, it was highly proper and ſuitable to his Character, to ſpeak modeſtly of himſelf, and to make uſe of the loweſt Title, that he had, as beſt becoming his preſent Condition.

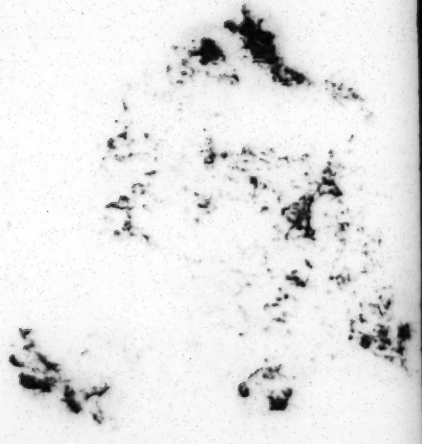
But there is another Reaſon, which ſome have aſſigned, for the frequent Uſe that he makes of this Appellation, and that is, its being a prophetick Name, whereby *Daniel* has thought fit to deſcribe the promiſed *Meſſiah*. *I ſaw in the Night Viſions*, ſays he, *and behold one, like the* Son of Man, *came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and there was given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages ſhould ſerve him:* 'Tis in Alluſion to this therefore (as theſe Men think) and in order to aſſert his Claim to the Office of the *Meſſiah*, that our Saviour commonly calls himſelf by that Name.

However this be, 'tis certain that he is not ſo fond of the Name of the *Son of Man*, as not to deſire to be conſidered in the Capacity of the *Son of God* likewiſe. For, when he put the Queſtion to his Diſciples, *Whom ſay ye that I am?* and *Peter*, in the Name of the reſt, replied, *Thou art* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God*, he is far from being diſpleaſed with the Anſwer, when he returns the Apoſtle this Complement, *Bleſſed art thou*, Simon Bar-jona, *for Fleſh and Blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father, that is in Heaven.*

Our

S^{t} LUKE 15 Verse 5.

The two Parables of y^{e} Sheep & piece of Money that were lost, & found again.



Our Saviour indeed was ſo far from making any unneceſſary Declarations of himſelf, that, on ſome Occaſions we find him labouring to conceal his divine Character, and charging his Diſciples to ſay nothing of it, until his Reſurrection; but, notwithſtanding this, whenever he was fairly called upon, and eſpecially by Perſons inveſted with Authority, he never concealed it. When *the Jews came round him in Solomon's Porch, and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou make us doubt? if thou be the* Chriſt, *tell us plainly*; his Anſwer is expreſs: *I told you, and you believed me not; the Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witneſs of me, for I and my Father are one.* When he ſtood before the Judgment-ſeat, and the High-prieſt demanded of him, *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the* Chriſt, *the Son of God*, his Reply is, *Thou haſt ſaid*, or (as St. *Mark* expreſſes it) *I am; and ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the Right-hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Nay, there are ſome Inſtances, wherein, of his own Accord, and without any Demand of this Kind, he freely diſcovers who he was: For, having cured the Man that was born blind, and afterwards meeting him accidentally, *Doſt thou believe in the Son of God?* ſays he; whereupon the Man asking, *Who is the Son of God, that I may believe on him?* our Saviour replies, *Thou haſt both ſeen him, and he it is that talketh with thee.*

Tho' therefore our bleſſed Saviour delighted much in the Appellation of the *Son of Man*, yet, as he did not, upon that Account, decline the Title of the *Son of God*, and had, conſequently, two Natures united in the ſame Perſon, our Buſineſs is, to diſtinguiſh between theſe two Natures,

and then we ſhall ſoon perceive the Reaſon of our Saviour's informing his Apoſtles, that *his Father was greater than him*, viz. greater with reſpect to the Son's Humanity, though, as touching their Divinity, they are perfectly equal; or greater, as he is the Father, and conſequently, the Fountain and Original of the God-head, though their Nature and Eſſence be one and the ſame.

In the very Notion of *Paternity*, and *Filiation*, there is ſome kind of Sub-ordination implied; but then we are to obſerve, that this is not a Subordination of Nature and Subſtance, no nor of eſſential Attributes, or natural Properties, but merely a perſonal Subordination, founded on the perſonal Properties: And, to be ſatisfied in this, we need only conſider, that the Communication of the Eſſence, upon which this Subordination is grounded, is only a perſonal Action, and not an Act, or Attribute of the divine Eſſence. To generate, and to be generated, are not eſſential Attributes of the divine Nature, but merely perſonal Acts of the Father and Son; and conſequently, the ſole Foundation of this Subordination being merely in perſonal Properties, the Subordination itſelf, founded thereon, can only relate to the perſonal, and not at all to the eſſential Properties; for, notwithſtanding the Son's perſonal Subordination, he ſtill continues with the Father *in Subſtance equal, in Majeſty co-eternal.*

When therefore our Saviour ſeems to own his Inferiority of Knowledge, and to profeſs himſelf ignorant of ſome future Events, that the Father had reſerved to himſelf, the Meaning muſt be,—Either that, as *Man*, he did not know beyond the Capacities of an human and finite Underſtanding, and not what he knew, as *God*; or that, as a *Pro-*

phet ſent from God, he had no Commiſſion to declare it, and what was no Part of his prophetick Office, *he knew nothing of, i. e.* had no Inſtructions to reveal it. For, that in this Senſe the original Word is ſometimes taken, we may learn from that Paſſage to the *Corinthians*, where St. *Paul* tells his Diſciples, that he had *determined not to know any Thing among them, i. e.* not to teach, or inſtruct them in any Point of Doctrine, ſave *Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.*

"It is one Thing therefore (ſays the Learned "*Lightfoot*) to underſtand the *Son of God*, barely "and abſtractly, for the *ſecond Perſon* in the holy "Trinity, and another, to underſtand him for "the *Meſſiah*, or *ſecond Perſon incarnate.* To ſay "that the *ſecond* Perſon of the Trinity is ignorant "of any Thing, is blaſphemous: But to ſay ſo "of the *Meſſias* (tho' he be that *ſecond* Perſon in "the Trinity) is not ſo. For, tho' the ſecond "Perſon, abſtractly conſidered, according to his "mere *Deity*, be co-equal with the Father, co-"omnipotent, co-omniſcient, co-eternal with "him; yet the *Meſſias*, who is *God-Man*, conſi-"dered as the *Meſſias*, was a Servant and a Meſ-"ſenger to the Father, from whom he received "Commands and Authority;" as himſelf frequently declared, *that he ſpake nothing of himſelf, but that the Father, who ſent him, gave him Commandment what he ſhould ſay, and what he ſhould ſpeak.* Tho' therefore it plainly appears, both from the many Prognoſticks which he mentions, and the exact Deſcription which he gives of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, that our Saviour could not but know the preciſe Day and Hour of its happening, yet this he might call one of *thoſe Times*

and Seaſons, which the Father had put in his own Power, becauſe he had received no Order or Direction for him to reveal it.

The Generality of the Ancients however run into the other Notion, which ariſes from the Conſideration of the two Natures in *Chriſt*, and therefore (with *Cyril* of *Alexandria*) they ſay, that he ſometimes declared himſelf as *God*, and ſometimes as *Man*, thereby to ſhew, that as he was *very God*, and *very Man*; that he was pleaſed, in reſpect of his Manhood, to ſuffer Hunger and Thirſt, and other inconveniencies of that kind, ſo he condeſcended to take upon him the innocent Infirmities of it, (among which *Ignorance* of future Events is one) but this without any Diſparagement to his Godhead, *wherein are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*; and that, in ſhort, he both *knew*, and *knew not*, when the *Day and Hour*, here ſpoken of, would come; the former with reſpect to his *divine*, and the latter, to his *human* Nature.

And indeed, in regard that our bleſſed Saviour had the divine and human Nature both united in one Perſon, great Caution muſt be uſed in obſerving his Actions and Affections, that we do not miſtake in aſſigning any of them to a wrong Principle: For, as thoſe Works of Wonder, which exceeded or controuled all the Powers of created Nature, muſt be attributed to a Principle omnipotent and divine; ſo in thoſe others, which relate either to Joy or Sorrow, Subjection or Exaltation, he muſt be underſtood to proceed upon a Principle purely human, and that the Faculties of the divine Nature were, in ſuch Caſes, totally ſuſpended.

Now

Now it is certain, that the Perfections of the divine Nature will admit of neither any Increaſe or Diminution of its Power and Greatneſs. The Author to the *Hebrews* applies to our Saviour *Chriſt* theſe Words in the Pſalmiſt, *Thou, O Lord, in the Beginning, haſt laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hand*; and ſurely he, who created the World, and *without whom not any Thing was made, that was made*, could not fail of having, from all Eternity, a ſovereign Power both in Heaven and Earth. 'Tis not of his Divinity therefore, that our Lord ſpeaks of his Enlargement of Power, but of his human Nature, which, in Reward of his Obedience and Humiliation, was highly exalted, and obtained from God a *Name, which is above every Name, that at the Name of* Jeſus *every Knee ſhould bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth, and that every Tongue ſhould confeſs, that* Jeſus Chriſt *is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.*

It is equally certain, that the divine Nature is not capable of any Grief or Sorrow, or other Perturbation of Mind, ariſing from an Apprehenſion of ſome imminent Danger, or a Senſe of ſome incumbent Calamity; and therefore, when our Saviour complains of the vaſt Load of Sorrow, that lay heavy upon his Spirits, and almoſt quite ſunk them down, this he muſt be ſuppoſed to ſay with regard to his human Nature only, becauſe his divine was exempt from all ſuch Suffering. But then, the Queſtion is, from what particular Cauſe it was, that all this Sorrow, and Fear, and Conſternation of Mind (for ſo the original Words import) could poſſibly ariſe?

Thoſe,

Thoſe, who impute all this to nothing more than a natural Dread of Pain and Death, have this Difficulty to contend with, that how grievous ſoever theſe Things may be, eſpecially to ſinful Fleſh and Blood, yet they are ſuch as have been corrected by Reaſon, and, in their moſt tremendous Shapes, born with great Patience and Reſignation of Mind; and therefore it can hardly be imagined, that the Proſpect of a Crucifixion could have raiſed ſuch Commotions in a Soul, which had the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience to ſupport it, and a glorious Reward ſet before it, to make a full Recompence for what it ſuffered.

Others are of Opinion therefore, that this exceſſive Sorrow and Dejection of Mind, were occaſioned by a perfect and penetrating Light, which then diffuſed itſelf in our Saviour's Mind, all at once, concerning the Guilt of Sin, and the Wrath of an incenſed God; that the Horror of theſe filled and amazed his vaſt apprehenſive Soul; and that theſe Apprehenſions could not but affect his tender Heart, full of the higheſt Zeal for God's Glory, and the moſt relenting Compaſſion for the Souls of Men: "For, if the true Contrition of one "ſingle Sinner, ſay they, bleeding under the Sting "of the Law, only for his own Iniquities, cannot "be performed, without great Bitterneſs of Sor-"row and Remorſe, what Bounds can be ſet to "that Grief, what Meaſures to that Anguiſh, "which proceeded from a full Apprehenſion of all "the Tranſgreſſions of ſo many Millions of Sin-"ners?"

This is the common Solution: And yet there is ſomething in the Context, which has induced others to think, that, on this Occaſion, the Devil and his

his Angels had collected all their Force, in order to fill our Saviour's Mind with the moſt diſmal terrifying Scenes of Horror, thereby to divert him from his intended Enterprize. For, *firſt*, we may obſerve, that, before he entered the Garden, where this Agony ſeized him, he expected ſome terrible Aſſault from the infernal Powers, and therefore he tells his Diſciples, *the Prince of this World cometh*, *i. e.* is now muſtering up his Legions, to make his laſt Effort upon me; but this is my Comfort, that *he will find nothing in me*, no ſinful Inclination to take Part with him, no guilty Reflection to expoſe me to his Tyranny. 2*dly*, That, when the Diſciples entered the Garden with our Lord, he gave them a ſtrict Charge *to watch and pray, that they might not enter into Temptation*; which plainly implies, that, in that Time and Place, there was ſome Occaſion for a more than ordinary Application to theſe Duties; and this cannot ſo well be imputed to any Thing elſe, as thoſe Numbers of evil Spirits who were going furiouſly to aſſault their Maſter, and would not altogether ſpare them. And, 3*dly*, That when the three elect Apoſtles were a little advanced with him into the Garden, he earneſtly intreated them *to watch with him*, and yet we find them ſuddenly aſleep, and, no ſooner awoke, but aſleep again, and again, for the Text tells us, *that their Eyes were heavy*; which prodigious Drowſineſs of theirs, upon ſo momentous an Occaſion, cannot be aſcribed to any Thing ſo well, as to a preternatural Stupefaction of their Senſes, by ſome of theſe infernal Spirits now conflicting with their Maſter; and who, perhaps, to deprive him of the Solace of their Company, did, by their diabolical Arts, produce that extraordinary *Stupor*, which oppreſſed them, that ſo, having him alone,

they

they might have the greater Advantage to tempt and terrify him.

Theſe Obſervations make it highly probable, that this, his laſt Agony, was occaſioned by a mighty Struggle and Conflict with the *Powers of Darkneſs*; who having, by God's Permiſſion, muſtered up all their Strength, intended once more to try their Fortune againſt him, and to this Purpoſe ſurrounding him, very probably, with a mighty Hoſt, exerted all their Power and Malice, in perſecuting his innocent Soul; in diſtracting it with horrid Phantaſms; in afflicting it with diſmal Suggeſtions; in vexing and tormenting it with dire Imaginations, and dreadful Spectacles; and, in ſhort, in practiſing all the Arts and Machinations that their Malice and Subtilty could invent, to tempt, and deter him, if poſſible, from his gracious Deſign of redeeming Mankind.

Had our Lord indeed, in this Conflict, been aſſiſted with any Succour from his Divinity, this would have ſet him far above the Oppoſition of any created Power; but (that the *ſecond Adam* might make a Reparation for the Fall of the *firſt*, and, in that very Nature, left to itſelf, and unaſſiſted by any foreign Aid, vanquiſh the Enemy that had given it ſo grievous a Foil before) the divine Perfections lay by, as it were, and forbore to engage: They withdrew their Influence for that Time, and, ſuſpending their Operation, left him to encounter as a Man, tho' much more perfect than any other Man.

Putting all theſe diſmal and diſtracting Things together then, the Apprehenſion of a cruel and ignominious Death, the Senſe of the Guilt and heinous Nature of Sin, the Proſpect of God's Wrath, the Combination of Devils, and the Suſpenſion of the

the divine Power and Protection, we need not much wonder, that we find our bleſſed Saviour in the Garden, complaining, that *his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death*; or, on the Croſs, crying out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* That we find him, in the midſt of his *Agony, ſweating out Blood* in great Abundance; deprecating Death with more Vehemence than ſome *Heathen* Sages, and many *Chriſtian* Martyrs did; and, when his Spirits were thus depreſſed, his *human* Nature quite exhauſted, and no Relief from the *divine* afforded him: That an Angel ſhould be ſent *from Heaven to revive and ſtrengthen him.* For, when the Divinity, which reſided in him, had either ſuſpended, or ſubſtracted its Influence, he, who, in reſpect of his Manhood, *was made a little while inferior to the Angels,* and, in reſpect of his Sufferings, was now in a more diſtreſſed Condition than ever Man knew, being left to his human Nature alone, could not but ſtand in need of the Comfort and Conſolation of an Angel.

All this while the divine Nature of *Chriſt*, tho' it did not think fit to exert itſelf, was inſeparably united to the human, nor can we conceive, why it ſhould not ſtill continue; even after Death, in the ſame Manner united, ſince no Power has any Force againſt *Omnipotence,* nor could any finite Agent work any Alteration in that Union. For though *Chriſt*'s Soul and Body were disjoined from one another by Death, yet were they not disjoined from him, who took them both together, but rather, by Virtue of that remaining Conjunction, were united again after their Separation. In this intermediate Time however, what ſeems to ſolve all Difficulties beſt, is the ancient Notion of the

Godhead's being quieſcent, and not exerting its Power and Efficacy, in ſuch Inſtances, where the *Humanity* is known to have ſuffered. In this Manner it confeſſedly withdrew at his Death, otherwiſe we cannot ſee how he could have died at all; and in this Manner, by Parity of Reaſon, it might continue its Quieſcence, during the whole Space of his Interment, and until its Power and Operation were requiſite, in order to effect his Reſurrection.

As our bleſſed Saviour was then *God* and *Man* in one Perſon, and the Efficacy and Myſtery of Man's Redemption conſiſted in this Union, it was neceſſary, that there ſhould be a clear and undoubted Demonſtration given of the Reality of both theſe Natures. But, ſince the diſtinguiſhing Marks of human Nature lie chiefly in the Soul, there had not been that Demonſtration given of our Saviour's perfect Humanity, unleſs he had diſcovered, in his Conduct, an exact Reſemblance to us, in all the natural Paſſions and Inclinations of our Souls. Now, in this Soul of ours, there is a twofold Principle, *Senſe* and *Reaſon*. *Senſe* catches at the preſent, purſues Eaſe and Safety, and induſtriouſly conſults the Preſervation and Advantage of the Body; whereas *Reaſon* enlarges our Proſpect, takes into Conſideration diſtant and future Objects; and perſuades the foregoing ſome Satisfactions, the running ſome Hazards, and enduring ſome Difficulties, in the Diſcharge of our Duty, and the Expectation of a greater Good in Reverſion. Under the former of theſe are comprehended all our natural Paſſions, which are the ſecret Springs that move us to whatever we do; under the latter are the Underſtanding and Judgment, which direct, and regulate, and bound,

and

and over-rule theſe Paſſions. But ſtill both theſe are conſtituent Parts, and as neceſſary to make a perfect Soul, as a rational Soul and human Body are to make one perfect Man; and from hence it follows, that the Weakneſs and Corruption of our Nature (as it ſtands depraved by Sin) does not conſiſt in our being tenderly touched with the Fear of preſent Evil, or the Deſire of preſent Good, but only in ſuffering theſe Fears and Deſires to prevail and take place, againſt the Dictates of Reaſon and Duty.

Averſion to Pain and Conflict, to Sorrow and Death, and whatever is ſhocking and frightful to human Nature, are Affections interwoven with our original Frame and Conſtitution. *Adam*, in his State of Innocence, felt them; and therefore it is no juſt Reflection upon the *ſecond Adam*, that he, in like manner, felt them too. *Infirmities*, indeed, theſe Averſions may be called, in Compariſon of thoſe *Perfections*, which belong to God and unbodied Spirits; but then they are ſuch Infirmities, as all, who partake of Bodies, muſt have; and which if our Saviour had been deſtitute of, he could not have been truly Man.

Now, if *Chriſt*, as *Man*, could not be altogether indifferent and unconcerned at ſuch ſevere Trials, as the Impoſition of the Burden of our Sins, the Infliction of Pain and Torment, his approaching Conflict with the Powers of Darkneſs, and the utter Subduction of all divine Aid and Aſſiſtance, muſt neceſſarily bring upon him; then ſurely it could not misbecome him, to uſe all poſſible Means for declining them, and, conſequently, to expreſs his Concern, by praying againſt them, but with this modeſt Reſerve and Limitation, *Nevertheleſs*

vertheleſs not my Will, but thine be done. For it was no Diſparagement either of his Obedience to God, or Love to Mankind, to deteſt Death, and Pain, and Sufferings, but, in Truth, an higher Commendation to both; ſince, notwithſtanding ſo tender a Senſe of what he was to ſuffer, he offered himſelf to undergo whatever God, for their Benefit and Salvation, ſhould think proper to lay before him. So that the more paſſionate his Wiſhes were for a Releaſe, the more meritorious was his Submiſſion; and the ſtronger his Averſions were, the more was the Reſignation of his own Will, and conſequently, the more acceptable was his Compliance with that of his heavenly Father.

His heavenly Father, no doubt, could have exempted Mankind from Puniſhment, without an equivalent Compenſation for their Guilt. As an all-wiſe Being, he could have invented many Methods of Salvation, without the Sacrifice of his beloved Son; and, as a ſupreme Lawgiver, he might have extended Mercy to whom, and upon what Terms he thought fit: But then, as he was the ſupreme Lawgiver, and Governor of the World, it was conſiſtent with his Juſtice, and his infinite Wiſdom, we may ſay, required it of him, to vindicate the Authority of his Laws, and to ſee Sin puniſhed, in ſuch an exemplary Manner, as to deter, if poſſible, his Subjects from it for the future.

Now this was the State and Condition of Mankind, when God's infinite Wiſdom contrived the Scheme of their Redemption. They had alienated themſelves from him; were under Sin, under Condemnation, under the Curſe of the Law, under the Sentence of Death. In this Condition however they were not to be left to periſh; God's infinite Good-

Goodneſs would not permit *that*: But then, how to accompliſh their Recovery, and preſerve his Attributes inviolate, this was the Difficulty. For how, in Conſiſtence with the Glory, and Juſtice, and Sanctity of God, could ſuch Enemies be reciled, and ſuch Offenders Pardoned? Would *Omnipotent Majeſty* think of any Treaty, without an Advocate and Interceſſor? Would the ſovereign *Ruler* of the World ſuffer his Honour to be ſlighted, without a proper Vindication? Would the great *Patron* of Juſtice relax the Terms of it, and permit Wickedneſs to paſs unpuniſhed? Would the God of *Truth* reverſe his Decree, and ſtop the Sentence of Death from falling upon Sinners? Or would the God of *Righteouſneſs* omit any Opportunity of expreſſing the Love he bore to Innocence, and Abhorrence to Iniquity? How then could we well be cleared from our Guilt, without an Expiation; or reinſtated in Freedom, without a Ranſom; or exempted from Condemnation, without ſome vicarious Puniſhment? No, God was pleaſed ſo to proſecute his Deſigns of Goodneſs and Mercy, as not, in the leaſt, to impair and obſcure, but rather advance and illuſtrate, the Glories of his ſovereign Dignity, of his ſevere Juſtice, of his immaculate Holineſs, and Immutability both in Word and Purpoſe.

He was willing to liſten to a *Treaty*, but from the Mouth of no *Mediator*, but ſuch as was of *equal Dignity* with himſelf. He was willing to remit the Puniſhment due to our Sins, but not without a Sacrifice, that would make full Attonement for them. He was willing to give us back our Lives again, but not without a Subſtitution of another Life equivalent to them all. But now, how could

could theſe Things be done? Where could we find a *Mediator*, proper, and worthy to intercede for us, and to negotiate a new Covenant, whereby God might be ſatisfied, and we ſaved? Who could offer for us a Sacrifice of Value ſufficient to attone for Sins, ſo vaſtly numerous, and all committed againſt infinite Majeſty? Or who could find out the everlaſting Redemption of all the Souls, ſince the firſt Creation, and lay down a competent Price for them? Nothing on Earth, nothing in Heaven, was found able to do this.

Man, the moſt innocent and upright Man, could by no Means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ranſom for him. Angels have Obligations enough of their own to diſcharge, and cannot be ſolvent for any more than the Debt of their own Gratitude and Praiſe. The brighteſt of that heavenly Hoſt cannot, over and above this, make Compenſation for one human Sin; but, for the Sins of the whole World united, there was no Propitiation to be found, until *the Son of God* offered himſelf, and was accepted by the Father. Our Humanity he aſſumed, to enable him to ſuffer, and intereſt us in what he did; but the Divinity, which he had with the Father from the Beginning, this he brought with him, to derive an infinite Value upon his Sufferings, and to make the Ranſom and Oblation, which he paid down for us, a full Satisfaction for Sins innumerable, and infinitely heinous.

In the Expiation of theſe Sins we own, that the Puniſhment, which our Saviour ſubmitted to, was but temporal, whereas that, to which Sinners are obnoxious, is eternal; but for that ſeveral good Reaſons may be alledged. The Author to the *Hebrews*, in his Compariſon between the *Levitical*

and *Chriſtian* Diſpenſations, tell us, that *ſuch an High-prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners, and who needeth not daily (as the High-prieſts under the Law) to offer up Sacrifices, firſt for his own Sins, and then for thoſe of the People*; ſo that what qualified him to offer a Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind was his perfect Innocence; for had he been, in any Degree, a Sinner himſelf, he muſt have ſuffered for his own Offences, and conſequently, been incapable of effecting an Expiation for ours.

Now, if our bleſſed Saviour was intirely innocent and holy, it was impoſſible that he ſhould ſuffer the ſame Puniſhments which, by the juſt Decree of God, are due to wilful and impenitent Sinners. He could not do it in his Body; for that could only die by what he ſuffered on the Croſs: and he could not do it in his Soul; for how could that Soul, which knew no Sin, be under a Remorſe of Conſcience for any Thing, that he had done? How could the Worm that *never dies*, lodge in his ſacred Breaſt? or he, *who, for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs*, lie under any Senſe of God's unchangeable Diſpleaſure? or he, who knew that *his Soul ſhould not be left in* Hades, *nor his Body ſee Corruption*, be ſeized with an abſolute Deſpair of any better State, or an uneaſy Apprehenſion of no Releaſe from what he was to ſuffer? The Puniſhments of the Damned are without End, and without Hope: But everlaſting Miſery and Deſpair could never be conſiſtent with the Condition of one, who had not deſerved them, and whoſe Innocence ſecured and preſerved him from them. Theſe are the Conſequences of Diſobedience and Rebellion againſt God: But the Sufferings of *Jeſus* were the greateſt Proof of an

entire

entire Obedience, in the moſt difficult Inſtance of Submiſſion, and ſo far from incurring the divine Diſpleaſure, that, for this very Cauſe, *God hath highly exalted him.*

But though, from the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing it appears, that our Lord neither did, nor could ſuffer ſuch Puniſhments, in Kind and Meaſure as were due to Sinners; yet it muſt be obſerved, that he underwent ſuch Things as bore ſome Analogy to what Sinners are to ſuffer, and what he would not have ſuffered, had he not been puniſhed for our Tranſgreſſions.

For, whereas Sinners lie under the Sentence of Condemnation, and are ſure to find a publick exemplary Judgment; ſo was our Saviour ſolemnly condemned, and ſentenced as a Malefactor, a ſeditious Perſon, a Perverter of the Nation, a Rebel againſt *Cæſar*, and a Blaſphemer againſt God. Whereas Sinners will be expoſed to Shame and Ignominy, at the great Day of Judgment, before Men and Angels; ſo our Lord ſuffered a very ſhameful and ignominious Death, and that attended with all the Mockeries, Affronts, and Obliques, that the Malice of his Enemies could caſt upon him. And whereas Sinners are obnoxious to very grievous Torments both of Body and Soul, and theſe inflicted by the Hand of an enraged God; ſo, in his Perſon, our Lord ſuffered a Death, painful to ſuch a Degree, as to make the moſt exquiſite Tortures be called *Cruciatus*, from the *Croſs*; and, in his Mind, ſuch a Load of Grief and Anguiſh, as might well juſtify the mournful Complaint of the Prophet, *All ye that paſs by, behold and ſee if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the Day of his fierce Anger.*

Now

S^t. MATTHEW 8. Verse 2, 3

A Leper upon his humble Prayer to Christ is healed.

Now from this fair Reſemblance between what our Lord actually ſuffered, and what Sinners had deſerved to ſuffer, there ſeems to be ſufficient ground to ſay, that he bore the Puniſhment of our Iniquities, and ſuffered in our Stead; though what he underwent was not, in every Point, the ſame that we (had it not been for his Interpoſition) muſt have been obliged to ſuffer.

All that was requiſite indeed in his Sufferings was, that the Injuries and Affronts, offered to the divine Juſtice, by the Provocation of wicked Men, ſhould receive a ſufficient Compenſation; that the Honour of God and his Laws ſhould be vindicated; and Sin made as terrible and full of Diſcouragement, as it could poſſibly be, though no ſuch Method of Mercy had ever been deviſed. Now all theſe Ends were fully ſatisfied by the Son of God condeſcending to ſuffer in our Stead; and, if there was any Thing wanting in the Duration, or Extremity of his Sufferings, that was abundantly made up by the Dignity of the Perſon, *who through the eternal Spirit* (*i.e.* the *divine* united to our human Nature) *offered himſelf without Spot to God*; and, in virtue of that Union, exalted the Value of his Oblation to an infinite Degree, and paid a Ranſom to offended Juſtice of more worth, than an hundred Thouſand Worlds.

But how great ſoever the Benefit was, which accrued to Mankind from the Death of our Saviour Chriſt, there is no apologizing for thoſe that were the bloody Inſtruments of it, and leaſt of all for *Judas*. For, beſides the Aggravation of his being a Diſciple, a Friend, a conſtant Companion, one that had been taught and ſuſtained by him, and not only an Hearer of his Doctrine, and Eye-

witneſs of his Miracles, but, in virtue of the Commiſſion received from him, a Preacher of the Goſpel and a Worker of Miracles himſelf; beſides all this, I ſay, 'tis evident, that his Wickedneſs was not the Effect of a ſudden Surprize, or want of Recollection, but the Work of Deliberation, and long Contrivance, and ſolemn Debate. For he conſulted with the High-prieſts and Elders, concerning the Time, the Place, and every Circumſtance, for the moſt convenient Execution of his Villainy: After ſuch Conſultation, he continued his Attendance upon his Maſter, that, under the Diſguiſe of Friendſhip, and by much laboured Hypocriſy, he might better carry on his Deſign to deſtroy him; and, as his Deſign was advancing to Maturity, he had all along had broad Hints and Monitions given him, that his Plot was diſcovered, and many Warnings of the Sin and Danger he was running into, but none of theſe altered his Purpoſe. So that, in this Act of his, there is a Complication of Ingratitude and Perfidy, Hypocriſy and Malice, and a ſettled inflexible Reſolution to do wickedly, beyond the Power of Advice and Warning, and the moſt awful Menaces to controul it: And this might be ſome Reaſon why his Repentance met not with Succeſs, as it is evident it did not, from our Lord's calling him *the Son of Perdition*, and declaring, that *it had been better for him, if he had never been born.*

The *Evangeliſts* indeed tell us, *that he repented himſelf*, but then it is evident, that by *repenting* is not every where intended a Change of Heart and Life; nor the whole of that, which Repentance ſtrictly ſignifies, when made the Condition of Pardon and Salvation, but only ſome Part and imperfect

perfect Degree of it. *Judas* found that Matters were grown to ſo deſperate an Height, that there was no probable Appearance of his Maſter's eſcaping the Malice of the *Jews*; and recollected, very likely, the Predictions of our Lord, concerning the dreadful Vengeance which ſhould overtake the Perſon that betrayed him to Death. Theſe, and probably many other dreadful Reflections, working together with all that Confuſion, which Fear and Guilt are known to create in Mens Minds, ſeem to have made up that Concern, which the Text hath expreſſed by *repenting himſelf*; a Concern reſulting from a Principle of Self-preſervation, in the moſt carnal Senſe of the Word: But we find not in him any due Senſe of the Villainy of the Fact, nor any condemning himſelf, as the baſeſt, the moſt ungrateful, the moſt abandoned Wretch alive; one, that had violated the Laws of God, and Society, and Nature, and caſt all Fidelity and Gratitude, and common Humanity behind his Back. All which, and a great deal more, were not only Aggravations due to his Crime, but the very propereſt Occaſions of Remorſe.

He felt indeed ſome Regret for what he had done (as an awakened Conſcience cannot fence off ſuch Reflections) and he wiſhed perhaps he had never done it: But the Regret which he felt, ſeems rather to have been the Effect of Confuſion and Rage, than any godly Relenting; the Agonies of Frenzy, and Amazement, and Deſpair, which are the moſt diſtant Things in the World from that ſober and regular Sorrow, *which worketh Repentance unto Salvation, not to be repented of.*

Herein then lay the Defect of *Judas*'s Repentance, that the Horror of his Sin led him into Deſpair. For Repentance, we muſt know, does not

barely conſiſt in Sorrow for Sin, but in ſuch a Sorrow, as is tempered and ſupported with Hope; not in a mere Confeſſion of our Tranſgreſſions, but in ſuch a Confeſſion, as truſts and depends on Forgiveneſs; and, as it imports a Change of Manners, unleſs we are firſt perſuaded that our ſincere Endeavours, for the future, will be kindly received, and our former Tranſgreſſions generouſly paſſed over, all Ground and Encouragement for ſuch a Change is utterly taken away.

Reaſon indeed cannot lead us to infer, that Sorrow for the paſt, or Amendment for the Time to come, can be any equivalent Satisfaction for our Offences; but Revelation aſſures us, that God may be appeaſed, and it hath told us withal in what Manner he is appeaſed, even by the precious Blood of his Son, *who came to give his Life a Ranſom for many*. In this Matter God hath declared himſelf ſo fully, that the very Heinouſneſs of our Sins is not a greater Provocation, than the Diſtruſt of Mercy (which, in Effect, is making God a Liar, and diſparaging the Merits of *Chriſt*'s Sacrifice) after we have committed them. So that, Hope of Mercy, and Faith in the Promiſes, and Satisfaction of *Chriſt*, are the very Life and Spirit of true Repentance, eſſentially, and indiſpenſably requiſite, to quicken and recommend every Part of it. And therefore no Wonder, if *Judas*'s Repentance proved ſo ineffectual, which was plainly deſtitute of theſe neceſſary Qualifications.

If it be enquired, how *Judas* came to be wanting in this Point? the immediate Cauſe, no Queſtion, was, that God had forſaken him, and withdrawn his Grace from him. But then, if we purſue this Enquiry ſtill farther, and follow it up to its true Fountain-head, the Matter will fall at laſt upon

upon *Judas* himſelf, as the proper and original Cauſe of his own Miſery and Deſtruction.

For, whatever we may think of the Doctrine of *Predeſtination*, 'tis certain, that the miſerable *Judas* was not aware of any Power in it to ſuſtain his Mind, when he came to reflect on what he had done. He could not interpret, that the Foreknowledge of God had any Cauſality, or Influence upon his Sins, becauſe he found Cauſe enough for that ariſing from his own Deportment: For, having given way to a covetous Deſire, and hardened his Heart by a ſinful Indulgence of it, againſt all Impreſſions of wholſome Counſel, he was convinced, that the Prophecy of his Treaſon could not fail of its Event, becauſe, when the Temptation offered, he could not chuſe but do what he did. He had indeed loſt all his Power and Liberty to do better, though ſtill the Neceſſity, which he then lay under, was not fatal, but natural, not of God's decreeing, but of his own procuring. Under theſe juſter Apprehenſions of his Crime, he is ſaid to have repented, in the worſt Senſe of the Word, *i. e.* he grieved, he deſpaired, and then he hanged himſelf: And though we allow that his Paſſions tranſported him too extravagantly in theſe latter Violences, yet, even from what was rational in his Grief, we may learn this Leſſon, ——That, when an awakened Conſcience comes to eſtimate the Nature of its Guilt, there will be found but poor Shelter in all thoſe Palliations, that can be formed by human Subtilty, and licentious Wit.

The Aggravations of St. *Peter*'s Offence in denying our Lord, are much of the ſame Kind with that of *Judas* in betraying him. That a Perſon, who,

who, for the Space of three Years and more, had the Honour of our Lord's Converſation, the Conviction of his Miracles, and the Inſtruction of his Doctrine; who had been let into the Knowledge of thoſe Myſteries, which, for wiſe Reaſons, were delivered in Parables, and concealed from others; admitted to his Transfiguration upon the Mount, his Converſe with *Moſes* and *Elias*, and to hear that Voice from God's excellent Glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, as himſelf teſtifies; that a Perſon, who, hereupon, had made Confeſſion of his Maſter's Divinity, and received his Commendations for it; had been choſen a Companion of his Agonies, and forwarned frequently of the great Danger of denying him; and hereupon grown ſo very reſolute, that he offered *to go with him into Priſon, and to Death*, and, to diſtinguiſh himſelf above any of his Brethren, *Though all ſhould be offended*, ſays he, *becauſe of thee, yet will I not be offended, and though I were to die with thee, yet would not I deny thee*: That a Perſon, I ſay, placed in this Rank and Elevation, ſhould fall off in the Time of Trial; ſhould deny and abjure his Maſter, whoſe greateſt Honour it was to own, implies a Guilt ſtill more heinous, the more his Knowledge and former Conviction, the more his Warning and long Experience, the more his Profeſſions and boaſted Firmneſs of Mind were conſpicuous.

This however may be ſaid with Relation to the Difference between the Crime of *Judas*, and that of St. *Peter*, that the former proceeded from a Spirit of Malice, and fixed Reſolution to do Evil, occaſioned by a ſordid and covetous Temper; that it was nourished up by long Contrivance and Deliberation,

liberation, was carried on by Hypocriſy and deep Diſſimulation, was executed with Perfidy and great Violence, and ended, at laſt, in the Agonies of Horror and Deſpair; whereas St. *Peter*'s Crime, (though a very great one) was but of a ſhort Continuance, and never in his Intention at firſt; was indeed the Effect of Fear and human Infirmity, occaſioned, in a great meaſure, by Surprize, and want of Recollection; not ſo much the Act of the Man, as it was the Force of the Temptation he was under; and therefore, when he *came to remember the Words, which* Jeſus *had ſaid unto him*, and thereupon to conſider, how ſhamefully he had fallen from his Courage and Conſtancy; how eaſily he had been betrayed into a Crime, he thought himſelf not capable of; how baſe he had been to ſo kind a Maſter, how falſe to his Promiſes, how regardleſs of Truth, how peremptory in a moſt notorious Falſhood, and how profane and profligate in his Oaths and Curſes; when he came to conſider all this, I ſay, a godly Sorrow ſwelled his Heart, and Tears guſhed out of his Eyes: *He went out and wept bitterly.*

Judas, in like manner, might weep for his Tranſgreſſion perhaps, but his Tears muſt have been ineffectual, becauſe the Seaſon of that Grace, which he had long reſiſted and defeated, was departed from him, and God provoked to give him over to his own Perverſeneſs; whereas our Saviour, who foreſaw from what Principle St. *Peter*'s Offence would ariſe, and how ſudden his Converſion would be, *had prayed for him, that his Faith might not fail*, and thence his Recovery did proceed. We ſhould be injurious however to the Memory of this Apoſtle, if we ſhould neglect to account how his After-behaviour ſhewed the Sincerity

rity of his Repentance, and made an ample Amends for the Scandal of his Offence.

It was the ſame St. *Peter*, that, after our Lord's Reſurrection, returned to the ſame Fervour of Affection, for which he was remarkable before; that ſo exerted himſelf at the Day of *Pentecoſt*, and proved, by irrefragable Arguments, *that* Jeſus Chriſt *was the Son of God*; that maintained his Point againſt the *Jewiſh* Rulers, deſpiſing their Rebukes and angry Menaces, and telling them plainly, that *God was to be obeyed rather than Man*; that confirmed his Brethren by his reſolute Behaviour, and made it a *Matter of rejoicing*, that he was *accounted worthy to ſuffer Shame* for the once-abjured Name of *Chriſt*. In a Word, 'twas he, who, after a long Labour of Preaching, and Perſecutions of all kind, at length finiſhed his Courſe, and glorified God by the ſame ſort of Death that his bleſſed Son condeſcended to undergo for our ſakes. So that St. *Peter* was not more different from himſelf, when trembling at the Voice of a ſilly Damſel, than the ſame St. *Peter* afterwards, the glorious and invincible Apoſtle, before the Council, in Priſon, and upon the Croſs, was from the cowardly and infamous Renegade, in the High-prieſt's Palace. This ſettled and deliberate Fidelity was a noble Compenſation for the Infirmity and Tranſports of this Fall. This ſhewed what the Man was when perfectly himſelf, and and ſupported by the Grace of God; as the other did what he was, when naked and deſtitute of heavenly Succours, depending upon his own Strength, and left in the Hand of his own Paſſions.

St. *Paul* repreſents our Saviour *as a merciful High-prieſt*, becauſe *he was touched with a feeling of our Infirmities*; and as it is natural for us to com-

compaſſionate thoſe that are in the ſame State of Suffering with ourſelves; ſo might our Lord, from the Society of Miſery, been induced at this Time to admit the *Penitent* upon the Croſs into a Participation of Bliſs, who, at another Time, would not have met with ſo ready a Reception. It might therefore be no ſmall Advantage to the penitent Thief, that he happened to die in Company with *Chriſt*, though it is certain, that the good Diſpoſition, which he diſcovered in his Behaviour and Confeſſion, was enough to recommend him to the divine Mercy.

'Tis highly probable, that this Man never knew any Thing of *Jeſus* before, otherwiſe than by common Fame; nay, that he was prepoſſeſſed againſt him as an Impoſtor, and joined with his Companion in reviling him at firſt; and therefore the greater was his Virtue in overcoming theſe Prejudices ſo ſoon, and in ſuffering the Meekneſs and Patience, the Charity and Piety of our Lord's miraculous Death to diſabuſe him. This is ſo far from making him a late Penitent, that it gives him the Glory of an early Convert; one, whoſe Heart was open to the firſt Impreſſion of Grace, and wanted not ſo much the Inclination, as the Opportunity of embracing the Truth before.

But admitting that he had ſeen, and heard of *Chriſt* before, yet that he ſhould now come in to the Acknowledgment of him, and believe him to be the *Saviour of the World*, when one of his Diſciples had betrayed, another had denied, and all of them had forſaken him; and to be *the Son of God*, and *Lord of Life*, when he was hanging on the Croſs, ſuffering the Pangs of Death, and ſeemingly deſerted by his Father. That he ſhould take

Sanctuary in a dying and univerſally deſpiſed Man, publiſh his Innocence in the Face of triumphant Malice, and, through the thickeſt Cloud of Shame and Suffering, that ever intercepted the Glories of the Son of God, diſcover his divine Power, acknowledge his celeſtial Kingdom, throw himſelf upon his Protection, and call upon him, as the great Diſpoſer of Rewards and Happineſs after Death. This was a Confeſſion ſo reſolute, ſo ſingular, ſo illuſtrious, as never was outdone, as never can, in all Reſpects, be equalled, except the ſame *Jeſus* were again to be crucified: For no Man's Converſion ever had, ever can have, upon other Terms, ſuch diſadvantageous and diſcouraging Circumſtances, as this Man laboured under, and yet ſo generouſly overcame.

Well therefore might St. *Chryſoſtom* (as he does with great Force and Eloquence) rebuke the Impudence of thoſe late Penitents, who preſume to take Sanctuary in this Example: For what Affinity, what Shadow of Reſemblance is there, between a Man ſubmitting to the firſt Impreſſion, and accepting of Offers aſſoon as made; and one, who has lived under the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and enjoyed both the outward Calls of God's Word, and the inward Sollicitations of his Spirit, but turned the deaf Ear continually to both? Between a Man, who to our Lord paid the higheſt Degree of Homage and Reſpect, even when he had made himſelf of no Reputation, and appeared in the Guiſe of the vileſt Malefactor; and one, who, notwithſtanding his Reſurrection from the Dead, and Exaltation to Glory; notwithſtanding the Conqueſt made by the Goſpel, and the Infamy of denying him now, continues ſtill to injure and affront,

affront, to deſpiſe and defy him, in his moſt proſperous and triumphant Condition?

In a Word, no *Chriſtian*, who hath lived under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, can, at the End of his Days, plead the ſame ready Compliance to the Calls of Grace, and no Man whatever can have the Opportunity of exerting the ſame vigorous Faith; becauſe *Chriſt* could die but once, and 'twas his Shame and Suffering alone, that made the Confeſſion of this Penitent ſo peculiarly glorious, and ſuch as the whole Series of a pious Life, in other Men, can hardly parallel. So that, if we are allowed to make any Uſe, or to draw any Conſolation from this Example, they muſt be no more than theſe, —— That it ſupports Men with an Inſtance of a great and grievous Malefactor, received into Grace, juſt at his leaving the World, and thereupon teaches us, that no Impurities of Life, though never ſo foul; no Crimes, though never ſo black, never ſo numerous, ſhut us out from Mercy, provided we ſincerely repent; that the Grace of God can recover Wretches, even when they are at the laſt Gaſp, and juſt dropping into Perdition: But as to actual Repentance itſelf, and ſuch Grace being extended to thoſe who have been habitual, profligate Sinners, all their Lives-long, the moſt that can be inferred from hence is, that ſuch a Thing may be, but it gives us no manner of Security, nor ſo much as one probable Argument, that it certainly ſhall be. This therefore is the Concluſion of the whole, —— Repentance, when true, is never too late, and therefore the Thief upon the Croſs is a ſovereign Antidote againſt Deſpair: But Men may out-ſtay the Day of Grace; they may not go about the Work until

it is too late, until they have loſt both the Will and the Power to repent; and therefore this Example, when truly conſidered, is an excellent Preſervative likewiſe againſt Preſumption.

It may be deemed perhaps ſome Miſtake in the *Evangeliſt*, or rather a Diſparagement to the *Holy Spirit*, by whoſe Direction, we ſay, it was he wrote, that St. *Matthew* cites *Jeremiah* for a Paſſage, which no where occurs but in the Prophet *Zechariah*; but then it ſhould be proved, that St. *Matthew* does actually cite *Jeremiah*. In moſt of the *Latin* and *Greek* Copies indeed, we have the Word *Jeremiah* at preſent, but it is much to be queſtioned, whether it was in the Original, ſince the *Syriack* and *Perſick* Verſions mention no Name, but barely the *Prophet*; and thoſe Copies (in St. *Auſtin*'s Opinion) are moſt to be relied on, which have not the Name of *Jeremiah* inſerted in them, becauſe this might poſſibly proceed from the Ignorance or Careleſſneſs of ſome Tranſcriber. Some of our modern Reconcilers have another Way of accounting for this. They endeavour to prove, from the Writings of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, that, both before, under, and after the ſecond Temple, the Order of the ſacred Books was ſeveral Times tranſpoſed, and that, in the Time when St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel, the Book of *Jeremiah* (as does now that of *Iſaiah*) ſtood firſt in the Volume of Prophets, and ſo became the running Title of all the reſt. For, that the firſt Book in a Volume may give Name to the reſt, is obvious, ſay they, from the Words of our Saviour's telling his Diſciples, that *all Things muſt be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of* Moſes, *and in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms, concerning him*: Where, by the Word

Word *Pſalms*, he means all the Hagiographa, conſiſting of Hymns to God, and Documents of Life, and are all ſo called, becauſe, in that Part of the Diviſion of the *Old Teſtament*, they had obtained the firſt Place. But as there are no Words cited, in the like Manner, from any other Prophet in the whole *New Teſtament*,

Others have imagined, that the Paſſage which St. *Matthew* quotes, was originally in the authentick Copies of *Jeremiah*, but that, by the Malice of the *Jews*, it was eraſed, becauſe it was looked upon as too plain a Prophecy of this Circumſtance of our Saviour's Life; or rather, that it was recorded in a certain Apocryphal Book of *Jeremiah*'s, from whence St. *Matthew* took it: For that there was ſuch a Book extant, is evident from the Teſtimony of St. *Jerom*, who expreſly tells us, that he read the very Words here quoted, in an *Hebrew* Volume, communicated to him by a *Jew* of the *Nazarene* Sect: And, that it was no Diſparagement to cite an *Apocryphal* Book, is manifeſt from the Practice of the Apoſtles, who make mention of *Jannes* and *Jambres*, tho' they no where occur in Canonical Scripture; who quote the Prophecy of *Enoch*, though generally reputed an Apocryphal Book; nay, and produce the Sayings of *Aratus*, *Epimenides* and *Euripides*, tho' theſe were profane Heathen Authors: For though ſuch Books, ſay they, were not received into the Canon, yet they might nevertheleſs contain ſuch Truths as were worthy of Belief.

Thoſe, however, who have compared the Writings of theſe two Prophets together, have obſerved, that *Zechariah* was ſo cloſe an Imitator of *Jeremiah*, as to give juſt Occaſions for the Saying

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of the *Jews*, viz. *that the Spirit of* Jeremy *had paſſed into* Zechary, *and ſo both together, made but one Prophet:* And from hence others have concluded, that the ixth, xth, and xith Chapters of *Zechariah* were not wrote by him, but by *Jeremiah*, though, at preſent they go under the other's Name. The Book of *Pſalms*, we know, though the whole Collection be called *David*'s, contains many Pieces that were not of his Compoſition. In that of *Proverbs*, there are ſeveral wiſe Sentences (beſides thoſe of *Solomon*) aſcribed to *Agur*, the Son of *Jaketh*, and to the Mother of King *Lemuel*; and, by Parity of Reaſon, theſe Chapters of *Zechariah* might originally have been written by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, though, in Proceſs of Time, they happened to creep in among the Works of his great Imitator.

And, indeed, whoever looks into the Contents of theſe Chapters, will ſoon perceive, that ſuch Things are related in them, as are inconſiſtent with the Time wherein *Zechariah* lived, but very well agree with that of *Jeremiah*: That what he ſays (for Inſtance) of the Pride of *Aſſyria* being brought down, and the Sceptre of *Egypt* being departed, could not be foretold by him, becauſe theſe Events were then paſſed and gone, but might very well be predicted by *Jeremiah*; that what he ſays of *Gaza* and *Askelon*, as Cities then in Being, could not be recorded of him; foraſmuch as theſe Places were deſtroyed long before his Days, but might properly enough be mentioned by *Jeremiah*, becauſe, in his Time, they were ſubſiſting; and that the Earthquake which he alludes to, in the Days of *Uzziah*, was of too diſtant a Date to be remembered in his Time;

Time; tho' it is not unlikely, that Tradition might have tranſmitted the Report of it down as far as the Days of *Jeremiah*. If then there be found in *Zechariah* Things inconſiſtent with his Time, but ſuch as comported very well with the Period wherein *Jeremiah* lived, it is natural to think, that though the whole Book went under another's Name; yet ſtill ſuch Parts of it as contained theſe Things, muſt have been wrote by a Perſon with whom they were co-incident, and that therefore St. *Matthew* is ſo far from committing any Blunder, that he makes a very valuable Diſcovery, in aſcribing the Prophecy now before us, to its proper Author.

Thus, take it which Way we will, we cannot juſtly accuſe the *Evangeliſt* of any Miſquotation, and much leſs can we charge him with any Miſrepreſentation of a Matter of Fact, in his making our bleſſed Lord able enough to drive all the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple. St. *Jerom*, indeed, reckons this one of the greateſt Miracles that ever our Saviour did, and imputes his Ability to do it, to a certain divine Majeſty, which, at that Time appeared in his Looks, and ſtruck the Company with ſuch a reverential Fear and Reſpect to his Perſon, as reſtrained them from making any Oppoſition: But, without having recourſe to any thing miraculous in this Tranſaction, we need only remember, that our Lord was juſt now come up from *Bethany* to *Jeruſalem*, in a Sort of royal and triumphant Proceſſion; that he was attended, on the Road, and into the City, with *a very great Multitude*, nay, *with Multitudes that went before, and followed after*; that theſe all went along with him into

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the Temple, and proclaimed (as they had done on the Road) *Hoſanna to the Son of* David; and that the Concourſe, in ſhort, was ſo great, that *all the City was moved*, and even the *Chief-prieſts were afraid of him*, and of the People too, *becauſe they took him for a Prophet, and were attentive to hear him.*

Now it is no hard Matter to imagine, that the People, ſeeing our Saviour proceed to the Temple in this triumphant Manner, might haply call to mind the Prediction of the Prophet *Malachi*, *The Lord whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple, even the Meſſenger of the Covenant, in whom ye delight, and he ſhall purify the Sons of* Levi, *that they may offer to the Lord an Offering of Righteouſneſs*; and that, from the Remembrance of this Prophecy they might be encouraged to abet his Reformation of the Temple. Nor is it to be doubted, but that a Conſciouſneſs of Guilt in the Profaners themſelves might, in ſome meaſure, contribute to their Submiſſion, and Acquieſcence even in the ſame Manner as his Enemies were ſtruck backwards with the Senſe of their own Guilt, as well as the Majeſty of his Appearance, and fell to the Ground, when they came to apprehend him in the Garden. So that, upon the whole, we are to conſider our Saviour in this Action, not in the Form of a deſpiſed Man, but of a triumphant Monarch rather, at the Head of an infinite Number of People, all rejoycing in the Completion of an antient Prophecy, all acknowledging him for their *Meſſiah* and King, and thereupon all ready to ſupport him in any Reformation, that he ſhould think proper to attempt.

The

S^t. MATTHEW 7. Verse 25.

A House built upon a Rock is immoveable; but a House built upon Sand, is easily thrown down.

The like is to be ſaid of the Relation which the *Evangeliſts* give us of the Darkneſs, which happened at our Lord's Crucifixion, that it is far from a Miſrepreſentation of the Matter of Fact, ſince we have it confirmed by the Teſtimony of *Phlegon*, who, in the xivth Book of his *Chronicles*, tells us, that in the fourth Year of the 202d *Olympiad* (which anſwers exactly to that of our Lord's Death) *there was the greateſt Eclipſe of the Sun that had ever been before, inſomuch, that at Noon-day the Stars were ſeen in the Sky*; by the Authority of *Thallus*, a *Greek* Hiſtorian, who, in his third Book ſpeaks of the Darkneſs that accompanied our Saviour's Death, and which he, in like Manner called an Eclipſe; by the Appeal which *Tertullian* and others made to the *Roman* Archives (where the Account, that *Pilate* ſent to *Tiberius*, of the Miracles which happened at our Lord's Paſſion, was depoſited) for the Truth of this prodigious Darkneſs; and laſtly, the general Conſent of all *Chriſtian* Authors, for the Space of the ſix firſt Centuries, who, in treating on this Teſtimony of *Phlegon* and *Thallus*, together with this Appeal to the *Roman* Records, without the leaſt Heſitation or Diffidence of their Truth: So that, the only Difficulty is, to know by what Means this ſtrange Phænomenon was effected.

Phlegon and *Thallus*, indeed, as they are cited by *Chriſtian* Writers, ſeem to make this Darkneſs a common Eclipſe, occaſioned (as others are) by an Interpoſition of the Moon between the Sun and the Earth; and thence ſome inferred, that there was nothing extraordinary in it: But, as it is a Thing very well known, that the Paſſover (when our Lord ſuffered) was always appointed at the

Full of the Moon, and is a Thing naturally impoſſible, that an Eclipſe ſhould happen, when the Moon is in this Condition; we have Reaſon to think, that this was an haſty Concluſion that theſe two Authors made, without ever bethinking themſelves of the Rules of Aſtronomy; that finding, in the publick Records of the Time of *Tiberius*, an Account of a prodigious Darkneſs, which at Noon-day made the Stars appear in the Firmament, this they ſuppoſed could have been effected only by an Eclipſe of the Sun, and upon ſuch Suppoſition affirmed that it was: Bnt, for one Circumſtance, unwarily advanced, it were Madneſs to reject their Teſtimony, which, in other Reſpects, exactly agrees with the Account of the ſacred Writings.

Others, by the Manner of their Expreſſion, ſeem to imply, that the Sun, upon this Occaſion, with-held its Rays, and, as it were, eclipſed itſelf, by reſtraining its Luſtre from iſſuing forth; never conſidering, that Light, in the Sun, is no accidental Thing, nor any Quality which it can ſuppreſs or exert, as it thinks proper. To ſhine is as neceſſary to it, as is its Being: Nor can its Rays meet with any Obſtruction, but when ſome opaque Body or other intervenes between us and them; and therefore, when the Fathers, in Conformity to the Stile of the Scripture, ſay, that the Sun, or the Stars withdrew their Shining, this muſt be looked upon as a figurative and popular Manner of Expreſſion, which ſeems to give theſe celeſtial Bodies a kind of free Action, thereby to make us more ſenſible of the Abſence or Suſpenſion of their Effects.

Others, therefore, with more probability think, that as the ſacred Hiſtory ſays nothing of the Sun,

Sun, this Darkneſs which it takes Notice of, was occaſioned by a great Number of condenſed Clouds, which gathering in the Air, intercepted the Light of Sun, and for the Space of three Hours, produced the ſame Effect that once happened in the Land of *Egypt*, *a Darkneſs that might be felt*. This Hypotheſis makes the Matter very eaſy, by placing the whole Miracle in the quick Formation of the Clouds at ſuch a Point of Time, and the ſpeedy Diſperſion of them, after ſuch a Continuance; only we muſt ſuppoſe that by the whole Earth, which the *Evangeliſt* tells us, was covered with this Darkneſs, we are to underſtand the Land of *Judæa* only, in which Senſe the Phraſe does not unfrequently occur in Scripture.

And, indeed, as the other wonderful Things, which came to paſs at our Saviour's Paſſion, ſuch as the trembling of the Earth, the rending of the Rocks, the opening the Graves, and tearing the Veil of the Temple, were tranſacted at *Jeruſalem*, or at moſt in *Judæa* only; ſo we have Reaſon to believe, that the Darkneſs which accompanied theſe Miracles, was of no greater Extent than they; becauſe the chief Deſign of this uncommon Appearance in the Heavens was, to convince the *Jews*, who blaſphemed our Lord and and his Diſciples, who believed on him, both then preſent at his Crucifixion, that notwithſtanding all the Humiliation, to which he voluntarily ſubmitted, he was in Reality the great Creator of the Univerſe; and even, while he was hanging on the Croſs, the Ruler and Director of all its Elements and Motions.

God, indeed, as he is an omniſcient Being,

cannot but foreknow all the Actions of Mankind, and therefore, when he pleaſes, may foretel any of them; but then, if his Foreknowledge or Predictions did ſo far Influence the Will of Men, as to lay them under a Neceſſity of doing, what he foreknows, or has foretold they will do, all Freedom in human Actions muſt be deſtroyed; conſequently all Vice and Virtue muſt be empty Names, becauſe none can be blamed for doing what he cannot help; nor does any deſerve to be praiſed, who does only that which he cannot avoid: And conſequently again, all future Rewards and Puniſhments muſt be diſcarded; becauſe, as it would be unjuſt to puniſh one Man for that which was not in his Power to avoid, ſo would it be unreaſonable to reward another for doing ſuch Actions as he found himſelf conſtrained and compelled to do.

When therefore we find the Evangeliſts declaring, that *the* Jews *could not believe, becauſe* Iſaiah *had ſaid, God had blinded their Eyes, and hardned their Hearts*, we muſt not ſuppoſe, that this Prophecy was either the Cauſe or Motive of their Infidelity. It was ſimply a Prediction, and as ſuch, laid upon them no manner of Neceſſity, or Compulſion. Such Prophecies, indeed, always include a tacit Condition, which preſerves to Man the Liberty of Choice; and if in their Event, they prove certain and infallible, it is only becauſe God certainly and infallibly foreknows the future bad Diſpoſitions of the People, of whom he ſpeaks, and has a clear Proſpect of that Blindneſs and Obduration which their Perverſeneſs brings upon them.

In relation to the *Jews* in particular, it is certain,

tain, that our bleſſed Saviour did not think, that his heavenly Father had, by any Action or Prediction of his, made it impoſſible for them to believe in him; for had he thought ſo, he would never have exhorted them (as we find he does in the Verſes juſt going before) *to walk in the Light, and believe in the Light, whilſt they had it*, and that to this good Purpoſe, that they *might become the Children of Light*: Becauſe every Exhortation to do a Thing, which we know to be impoſſible, muſt not only be vain and deluſory, but (if we know that Impoſſibility to proceed from a divine judicial Act) repugnant likewiſe to the Will of God, which, to ſuppoſe our Lord capable of, is the Height of Blaſphemy.

Since therefore, in the *Eaſtern* Phraſe, a Perſon is ſaid to do that, which he only permits to be done, *God's blinding the Eyes and hardening the Hearts of the* Jews, muſt mean no more than his ſuffering them to blind their own Eyes, and harden their own Hearts; which, upon the mere Subduction of his Grace, without the Infuſion of any perverſe Inclinations from him, they would not fail to do. And accordingly we may obſerve, that the ſame *Evangeliſt*, in another Place, ſpeaks of their Obduration and Blindneſs, as their own Act and Deed, for *this People's Heart is waxen groſs*, ſays he, *and their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes have they cloſed, leſt, at any Time they ſhould ſee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Hearts, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.*

Whoever conſiders the Series of the ſacred Hiſtory, may ſoon convince himſelf, that the Miracle which our Saviour wrought on the barren Fig-tree,

Fig-tree, happened about the eleventh Day of the *Jewiſh* Month *Niſan*, on *Tueſday*, very probably, before the *Paſſover*; for the *Paſſover*, we know, was kept on the fourteenth Day of *Niſan*, which anſwers to the latter End of our *March*. And that, at this Time, there were Figs in *Judæa* ripe, and fit for gathering, we have ſome Authority to believe.

When *Moſes* ſent away the Spies in ſearch of the Land of *Canaan*, it was, we are told, *in the Time of the firſt ripe Grapes*, and *they returned from ſearching, after forty Days*, and brought from thence *Pomegranates, and Figs, as well as Cluſters of Grapes*. Now the *Septuagint* Verſion ſays, that it was in the *Spring*, when theſe Spies ſet forward; and *Philo*, in his Life of *Moſes*, ſeems to be of the ſame Opinion. Suppoſing then, that it was about the Middle of the *Spring* (which, in *Judæa* began about the Middle of *January*) that the Spies ſet out, and they were returned ſome Days before the *Paſſover*; and if the Figs, which they brought, as well as the Grapes, were ripe and full grown, then were they ripe in *Judæa*, at the very ſame Time that our Saviour is here ſaid to have looked for them.

Solomon, in his Book of *Canticles*, gives us a lively Deſcription of the *Spring*, and, among other Signs of its being come, makes mention of this, —— That *the Fig-Tree putteth forth her green Figs, and the Vines, with their tender Grapes, give a good Smell*, or (as as it may more litterally be rendered) *the Fig-tree hath begun to give a Flavour to her young Figs, and the Vines a good Smell to the tender Grape*. Now, if in the Middle of our *January*, the Figs were ſo forward, as then

then to give a Flavour, 'tis reaſonable to think, that in ſo warm and fruitful a Climate, as *Judæa* was, there might be ripe ones about the latter End of *March*, which is the preciſe Time when our Saviour ſought for them upon this Fig-tree.

The Truth is, there were in *Judæa* Fig-trees of different Kinds; and, beſides the ordinary Sort (which, according to our Saviour, did not put forth its Leaves until the near Approach of *Summer*) the *Jewiſh* Writers make mention of one early Kind in particular, (called by them *Banoth-ſhuath*) which never wanted Leaves, and very ſeldom Fruit. Nay, *Pliny* tells us of ſome Sort of Fig-trees in *Syria* (under which Name he frequently comprehends *Judæa*) that *had always Leaves; and when the Fruit of the preceeding Year was gathered, the new Fruit began immediately, and was growing all the Winter long*; and therefore we need leſs wonder at what the Emperor *Julian* aſſerts, *viz.* that, at *Damaſcus*, in *Syria*, *there was a Sort of Fig-tree, whoſe Fruit, both old and young, grew together, and laſted beyond the Year*; or at what a very eminent Traveller, and great Naturaliſt teſtifies, *That ſome Sort of Figs grow in the* Archipelago *in Winter, Spring and Summer*; *but that the Garden-Fig is not ripe there 'till the End of* Auguſt, *or the Beginning of* September. From all which we may be allowed to conclude, that there might be Figs in *Judæa* fit to eat, at the Time when our Saviour went to look for ſome on this Tree.

Without entring into any other Solution then, If there were two Sorts of Fig-trees in *Judæa*, the one much earlier than the other, and thence two Seaſons of ripe Figs, the one much later than the other, and (as 'tis natural to ſuppoſe)

poſe) the latter much more common and plentiful than the former; the latter was properly called *the Time of Figs*, and the *Evangeliſts* might very truly ſay, that at the Time of the Paſſover, *it was not yet come*, i. e. the common and ordinary Seaſon for Figs was not come; tho', admitting this to be one of the early Kind, he might well expect to find ſomething upon it, ſince, by the Speciouſneſs of its Leaves, it looked ſo promiſing at a Diſtance.

He, without all doubt, knew perfectly well, before he went up to it, whether it had any Fruit on it, or no; but as he intended to work a Miracle upon it, and by its ſpeedy withering away, emblematically to ſhew his Diſciples the near approaching Ruin of the *Jewiſh* Nation, be it what it would, it anſwered his main End; but then it could not have been ſo fit a Type and Reſemblance of the *Jews*, had it not been barren, nor exhibited their Fate in ſo lively a Manner, had it not been curſed, and ſo withered away.

The *Jewiſh* Nation, indeed, at our Saviour's Coming, was, in all Degrees and Orders of Men, ſadly corrupted; but in none ſo much, as in the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who pretending to be the Doctors and Expounders of the Law, had vacated the Obligation to almoſt all moral Honeſty, by the Introduction of their falſe Gloſſes and Comments. Their great Shew of outward Sanctity, however, great Oſtentation in their Prayers and Piety, and punctual Performance of the ceremonial Part of their Religion, gave them great Authority among the People, and as high a Conceit of themſelves; inſomuch that they expected a blind Submiſſion to their Injunctions, and all imaginable Tokens of Reſpect and Veneration,

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whenever they appeared in publick: Though all this while their pretended Sanctity was but a Veil to cover their Vices, and inward Impurity, an Art to gain a Reputation, by making the beſt of the Shadow, while they wanted the Subſtance of Godlineſs.

Now if ſuch was the Depravity of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, when our Saviour lived among them, none can doubt, but that, as he was a Teacher ſent from God, he had a proper Authority to reprove them; ſince, under the *Moſaic* Law, this was a Duty incumbent even on private Perſons, and what they could not, without a manifeſt Breach of Charity, decline: For *thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart, thou ſhalt not in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him:* Where we may obſerve, that, in the Eye of this Law, not to rebuke our Brother is interpretatively to hate him; and therefore our Saviour ſtands in need of no farther Apology for reproving the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who had ſuch a Number of Sins upon them; ſince there was no omitting that, without violating this Command.

In his Rebukes, indeed, there ſeems to be a Spirit of Severity, ſomething that looks like Anger, and ſeveral Terms of Diminution and Diſreſpect. But then it ſhould be conſidered, that as Anger is a Paſſion implanted in human Nature, in itſelf, and upon all Occaſions, it cannot be unlawful; nay, when employed about proper and deſerving Matters, ſuch as the Honour of God, the Reverence due to his Laws, the Love of Virtue, and the Correction of Vice, it is not only innocent, but highly neceſſary and commendable. For there is a Tameneſs of Spirit

which deſerves Cenſure; and, in ſuch Caſes, we even do well, when we are angry.

In like Manner it may be obſerved, that Terms of Diſparagement and Reproach are, in ſome Caſes allowable, and more particularly when Men (as St. *Paul* expreſſes it) *are rebuked ſharply, to render them ſound in the Truth.* From the Mouth of a Superior they are often of uſe, and ſometimes of Neceſſity to rouze, and awaken ſtupid Men; to make them more effectually both ſenſible, and aſhamed of their Follies; to expoſe the horrible Abſurdity of pernicious Opinions, or the flagrant Enormities of wicked Practices; and in ſhort, are hardly ever diſcommendable, where Charity is at the Bottom; and an high Authority in the Reprover gives ſuch Language Countenance.

Now as none can call in Queſtion our Saviour's Authority, if he thought it convenient to make uſe of ſuch Severity in his Reproofs of a Set of People that moſt juſtly deſerved it; ſo need not any be offended at his denouncing ſo many Woes againſt them, when he finds God giving the Prophets of old, ſent to his Prieſts, who were negligent in their Duty, and corrupted in their Morals, juſt as they were now, Inſtructions to addreſs them in the ſelf-ſame Manner: *Thus ſaith the Lord God, Woe be unto the Shepherds of* Iſrael, *that do feed themſelves; ſhould not the Shepherds feed the Flock? Ye eat the Fat, and ye cloath you with the Wool; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the Flocks,* &c. And again, *Woe be unto thoſe Paſtors that deſtroy and ſcatter the Sheep of of my Paſture, thus ſaith the Lord, ye have ſcattered my Flock, and driven them away, and have not viſited them.* And if inferior Prophets were commiſſioned

miſſioned to make ſuch Denunciations, much more might this great Meſſenger of the Covenant (who was both inveſted with ſupreme Power from the Father, and perfectly knew what was in every Man's Heart, and therefore could not miſcal Things) be allowed *to reprove and rebuke all Authority*, and without Violation of that great Law of Charity, which is ſo peculiarly fitted to the evangelical Inſtitution, that upon ſundry Accounts it may not improperly be called a new Commandment.

This Commandment, indeed, of *loving one another*, is by our Lord and Saviour ſo much enlarged, as to the Object of it, extending to all Mankind, and even to our greateſt Enemies; is ſo greatly advanced and heightened, as to the Degree of it, even to the laying down of our Lives for one another; and is ſo effectually taught, ſo mightily encouraged, and ſo much urged and inſiſted upon, that tho' it was a Precept delivered by *Moſes*, yet, conſidering in what Manner the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had perverted the Senſe, and confined and diſcouraged the Practice of it, it may well enough be ſaid to have received in our Saviour a Republication. And, tho' it was not altogether unknown to other Nations before, yet it was never ſo taught, ſo encouraged; never was ſuch an illuſtrious Example given of it, never ſo much Streſs and Weight laid upon it, by any Philoſophy or Religion that was ever before in the World.

There are three Paſſages in the Prophet *Daniel*, which mention *the Abomination that maketh deſolate*; and to any of theſe our Saviour may be ſuppoſed to allude, for they are all Predictions of the Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* State, when the

Sacrifice and Oblations ſhould be made to ceaſe. 'Tis the Senſe, indeed, that our Saviour ſeems more to attend to, than the Words of the Prophecy; and, becauſe it was the Cuſtom of the *Roman* Armies to have an Eagle for their Enſign, in which they placed a Kind of Divinity; and to carry their Emperors Images along with them, to which they paid a religious Adoration, and therein committed ſuch Idolatry, as was highly deteſtable to every *Jew*; it is hence ſuppoſed, that *the Abomination ſtanding in the holy Place* means the *Roman* Army, with theſe hated Objects of their Idolatry, beſieging *Jeruſalem*; and that it is therefore called a Deſolation, becauſe it was appointed by Almighty God to lay the Country, City, and Temple of *Jeruſalem* deſolate and waſte; for ſo St. *Luke* ſeems to have explained it by a parallel Place, *When ye ſhall ſee* Jeruſalem *compaſſed with Armies, then know, that the Deſolation is nigh.*

Jeruſalem, indeed, may perhaps, in ſome Places of Scripture, be called the holy Place, but this is a Title ſo peculiar to the Temple, that we cannot but think, that our Saviour, in the Application of the Propiecy, intended it ſo here; eſpecially ſince his Diſciples, by ſhewing the Stateline ſs of its Building, gave the whole Riſe to his Diſcourſe. But now, if we ſuppoſe the Temple to be this holy Place, we cannot ſee how the Abomination here ſpoken of, could be the *Roman* Army, and their Enſigns, becauſe neither of theſe were ever in the Temple, until the Taking and Sacking of the City, and could therefore. in this Reſpect, be no Preſages at all. If we ſuppoſe the City of *Jeruſalem* to be this holy Place, 'tis certain, that this Abomination was lodged in it,

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long before the Approach of *Titus* with his Army, becauſe the *Romans* had all along a ſtrong Garriſon over-againſt the Temple, in Fort *Antonia*, where their Colours and Standard were ſet up: Nor can we readily conceive why the military Enſigns under *Titus* ſhould be thought an Abomination to the *Jews*, more than thoſe under *Pompey*, *Socius*, and *Ceſtius*, who had all, before him, beſieged *Jeruſalem*.

Theſe are ſome of the Difficulties that attend the common Interpretation; and therefore we ſhould rather think, that the Abomination of Deſolation, here ſpoken of, ſhould refer to that groſs Profanation of the Temple, which the Zealots, (who called themſelves ſo from their pretended Zeal for their Country's Liberty and Welfare) a little before the Beginning of the Siege of *Jeruſalem*. were perpetually committing. This Faction being headed by *Eleazar* the Son of *Ananias*, the High-prieſt, and ſtrengthened by an Acceſſion of Ruffians from all Parts of the Country, took Sanctuary in the Temple, and made uſe of it, both for a Place of Defence againſt their Adverſaries, and for the Seat of their Tyranny and Uſurpation. Here they aſſumed to themſelves the Power of diſpoſing of the Pontificate, and deſtroying the Succeſſion of the Prieſthood, promoted Creatures of their own, who had neither Blood nor Merit, to that ſacred Function. Here they erected their Courts of *Juſtice*, and, after the Formality of Mock-Trials, ſentenced to Death whom they diſliked, and then ſent their blood-thirſty Hirelings to ſee the Sentence put in Execution. Here they committed ſuch Violence and Rapine, ſuch Murther and Maſſacres, as made the Temple, in Reality, not only a Den

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of Thieves, but a common Slaughter-houſe likewiſe (as *Joſephus* calls it) to as many as they could get in their Power: And therefore it is highly probable that this abominable Deſolation is meant of the heinous Wickedneſs of theſe Zealots. This, when once it began to appear, the Diſciples were cautioned to decline the approaching Storm, by making the beſt of their Way out of *Jeruſalem*, which they could not have done ſo well, had they ſtayed 'till the Siege was formed, and the *Roman* Army had inveſted the Town.

That it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, before our Saviour's Time, and (as they themſelves affirm) before the Beginning of the Law, to baptize, as well as circumciſe, any Proſelyte that came over to them from another Nation; and in caſe ſuch a Perſon had any Infant Children then born to him, that they, at their Father's Deſire were in like manner circumciſed, baptized and, admitted as Proſelytes, is manifeſt from the inconteſtable Evidence of their Writers. The Incapacity of the Child to declare and promiſe for himſelf, was not looked on as a Bar againſt his Reception into the Covenant, but the Deſire of the Father to dedicate him to the true God, was accounted available, and ſufficient to juſtify his Admiſſion; and the Reaſon they give for this is: That the Things they were admitted to, were undoubtedly for their Good; for *one may privilege a Perſon*, ſay they, *tho' he be incapable of knowing it, but one ought not to diſprivilege any one, without his Knowledge and Conſent.*

Now this gives great Light to our better underſtanding the Meaning of our Saviour, when he bids his Diſciples *go and teach all Nations, baptizing them.* Baptiſm he took, as the eaſier Rite

of

of the two; and having converted it into a Evangelical Precept, made it the federal Form of Admiſſion into his Religion, as Circumciſion had been in the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation; and, as he gave his Apoſtles no Directions in their Commiſſion concerning little Children, it may juſtly be preſumed, that, with regard to them, he left them to proceed, juſt in the ſame Manner as the Church, wherein they lived, had been accuſtomed to do, and that was to make them Proſelytes to his Religion by Baptiſm.

That in the *Jewiſh* Church Infants were Part of thoſe who engaged in Covenant with God, is evident from theſe Words of *Moſes* to all the People; *Ye ſtand this Day before the Lord your God, you and your Little-ones, that thou ſhouldeſt enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, that thou mayeſt be a People to him, and he unto thee thy God*; and that in the *Chriſtian* Church, Children, in the like Manner, are under the Covenant of Grace, is more than intimated in St. *Peter*'s Exhortation to ſuch Perſons as he had converted, that they would receive Baptiſm in order to make their Children likewiſe capable of it, becauſe *the Promiſe was to them and their Children*, i. e. the Promiſe of Remiſſion of Sins, and of receiving the *Holy Ghoſt*, (mentioned immediately before) which appertained to the Covenant that belonged to them and to their Children. Now, if the Promiſe and Covenant belonged to the Children, as well as the Parents, there is no Queſtion to be made, but that Baptiſm, which is the Seal of the Covenent, and the viſible Confirmation of the Promiſe, belongs to them likewiſe; and if Infants have a Covenant Right to Baptiſm, we may ſafely

ly infer, that *Chriſt* never intended to debar them of it; and that conſequently, tho' they are not expreſly named, yet are they moſt certainly implied in the Commiſſion of the baptizing of all Nations: For ſince the Univerſal includes all Particulars, and Children make up a conſiderable Part of all Nations, the Words of the Commiſſion may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to comprize them; nor can we forbear thinking, but that, when we read of whole Families that were baptized, there muſt of courſe have been ſeveral Children in them; becauſe the *Greek* Word, which, in this Caſe, is rendered Houſhold, according to the Obſervation of the Learned, is of a large Signification, and takes in every individual Perſon of the Family, Women, as well as Men and Children, as well as grown Perſons.

The Adult, indeed, before they were admitted as Proſelytes to the *Jewiſh* Religion, were to be inſtructed in the Fundamentals of the Law in the Weight and Burthen of it, and in the Nature of its Rewards and Penalties, and to profeſs their Submiſſion to it; but then, it muſt be obſerved, that theſe Pre-requiſites in the Parent, who was capable of ſuch Inſtruction, did not exclude the Children then born, from the Rite of Baptiſm; ſo far from this, that by the Sentence of the *Sanhedrim*, the Church was obliged to baptize them, as having a Right to the Ordinance by their Parent's Faith. And, in like manner, they, who were arrived at a competent Age and Underſtanding, were to be inſtructed in the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, were to *confeſs with their Mouth the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *and to believe in their Heart, that God had raiſed him from the Dead,*

S^t. MATTHEW 5. Verse 24.
No Gifts acceptable at the Altar, unless thou art reconciled to thy Brother.

Dead, before they were admitted to Baptiſm. This was a Condition required of them, becauſe they were able to do it: but why this Condition ſhould exclude the Children of *Jewiſh* Proſelytes (who were uſually baptized together with their Parents) we cannot ſee.

Our Children, indeed, cannot underſtand the Nature and End of the Ordinance of Baptiſm; but neither were the *Jewiſh* Children, at eight Days old, able to know what the Purpoſe of Circumciſion was. They have no actual Faith of their own, but the Faith of thoſe who preſent them in the Congregation, is imputed, and themſelves are ſanctified by being born of believing Parents. They have no Room for Repentance, but then they have Innocence, which is a much better Qualification; and tho' they cannot ſtipulate for themſelves, yet have they Proxies and Sureties (of early Inſtitution both in the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Church) to contract, in their Names, whoſe Act is looked upon, and accepted by God, as theirs. In the mean time, that Infants, and young Children, (tho' inſenſible of what is done for them) may have Favours conferred on them, and are capable of receiving ſpiritual Advantages to their Souls, is plain from that Paſſage in the evangelical Hiſtory, where, when *young Children were brought to* Chriſt, *he took them up in his Arms, laid his Hands on them, and bleſſed them*, namely, by praying for a Bleſſing, by pronouncing a Bleſſing, and by actually conferring a Bleſſing on them; and if they are capable of being bleſſed, why ſhould they be thought incapable of being baptized? Since Baptiſm, in the main, is but a ſolem Benediction, as it inſtates us in the Privileges and Benefits of the Goſpel,

ſuch as Adoption and the Acceptance of our Perſons.

In ſhort, the Covenant of Grace is a Deed of Gift, made to us by *Chriſt*, wherein he promiſes to beſtow upon us eternal Life and Happineſs: And, as it would be abſurd to ſay, that a Child's Name ought not to be put into any Deed or Legacy, until he be of age to underſtand it; ſo it is equally abſurd, and far more injurious, to exclude our Children from this heavenly Legacy, which *Chriſt*, out of the Riches of his Goodneſs has bequeathed unto them: Eſpecially, conſidering that the primitive Church did all along, and every national Church, at this Day in the World, does admit their Children into the Chriſtian Covenant by this Ordinance; that many of the moſt antient Writers plead the Neceſſity of it, for the Expiation of original Guilt, and ſpeak of it as a great Sin in Parents, and others that have Opportunity, to ſuffer any Child of theirs, or any other Perſon under their Care, to die unbaptized.

In relation to the other Sacrament, there can be no great Difficulty in our Saviour's Words, if we will but admit that the Scripture very frequently makes uſe of figurative Expreſſions, and in Matters of a ſacramental Nature, more eſpecially, is apt to put the Sign for the Thing ſignified; as *Gen.* xl. 26. *The three Baskets are three Days*, Chap. xli. *the ſeven good Kine are ſeven Years*, Dan. viii. 20. *the Ram with two horns, are the Kings of* Media *and* Perſia, Gal. iv. 23. Sarah *and* Agar *are the two Covenants*, and Rev. i. 20. *the ſeven Stars are the Angels of the ſeven Churches*, are Inſtances of this kind: And when *Moſes*, ſpeaking of the *Paſchal* Lamb, tells the *Iſraelites*, This is the Lord's Paſſover, even before the Lord had paſſed over them,

them, and ſmitten the *Egyptians*; and of the unlevened Bread, uſed at the Paſchal Feaſt; *This is Bread of Affliction which your Fathers did eat in the Land of* Egypt, his Meaning can be no other, than that theſe Things were a Repreſentation and Memorial of what had befallen their Forfathers in *Egypt*. And therefore it is no Wonder, that our bleſſed Saviour, in the Inſtitution of this Sacrament, ſhould make choice of the like Form of Expreſſion, as was in Uſe in the *Jewiſh* Church, upon the like Occaſions; and conſequently, that when he ſays, *this is my Body*, and *this is my Blood*, his Meaning muſt be, that *This Bread in my Hand, and the Wine in this Cup, do ſignify and repreſent to you my Body and Blood; and that in eating and drinking of theſe, you are made Partakers of my Body and Blood*, i. e. *of the real Benefits of my Death and Paſſion.*

And, indeed, if we conſider that our bleſſed Saviour celebrated this Sacrament before his Paſſion, we ſhall ſoon perceive that his Words could not poſſibly bear any other Conſtruction; for how could he hold himſelf in his own Hand, or give his Diſciples his Body broken, and his Blood ſhed, when, at this Time he was alive, and no Violence had paſſed upon him? They ſaw his Body whole before them, and knew that his Blood was in his Veins, and therefore could not but conclude, that what they eat and drank, according to the Evidence of their Senſes, was Bread and Wine; for had they underſtood our Saviour's Words, in their literal Meaning, it is hardly imaginable, but that they, who upon all other Occaſions, were ſo full of their Queſtions and Objections, would, upon the hearing of this Paradox, have ſtarted ſome ſuch Scruples as theſe,——*We ſee this to be Bread,*

and that to be Wine, and we ſee that thy Body is diſtinct from both; we ſee that thy body is not broken, nor is thy Blood ſhed, how therefore can theſe Things be?

The antient Apologiſts for our holy Religion take notice, that this was one of the greateſt Accuſations which the Heathens brought againſt *Chriſtians*, that they did eat human Fleſh, which they endeavoured to refute, and conſtantly rejected as the vileſt Calumny, and moſt abominable Thing: But now, had they underſtood our Saviour's Words in a literal Senſe, and thereupon made it an Article of Faith, that they did daily eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, with what Sincerity could they (without all Limitation or Diſtinction) not only have denied, but even deteſted the doing ſo? Nay, nothing is more obvious, than that primitive Writers continually ridicule the Heathens, for worſhiping ſuch Deities as might be eaten, and inſtance particularly the *Egyptians*, who made the ſame Fleſh, which ſome of them did conſecrate as a God, the Food of others. But, how can it poſſibly be conceived, that they ſhould thus ridicule and expoſe the Religion of Heathens for that very Thing which made ſo great a Part in their own; or brand that, as the very Extremity of Madneſs and Folly, when done by others, which their Faith taught them, was the higheſt Act of religious Worſhip, when performed by themſelves? Theſe Things ſurely give us ſufficient Reaſon (with *Scotus*) to admire, that *ſuch an Interpretation ſhould be put upon this one Article, as makes our Faith contemptible to all that are guided with Reaſon*; and, at the ſame Time to aſſert, that, as it is apparently againſt Humanity, and againſt Piety, to break with our Hands, to tear

with

with our Teeth, and to devour, as we do common Food, the Fleſh and Blood of *Chriſt*; the Scorn of Atheiſts and Infidels will never ceaſe, until the Doctrine, which eſtabliſhed theſe Poſitions, be baniſhed from the *Chriſtian* Church.

We own, indeed, that the whole Streſs of the *Chriſtian* Cauſe lies upon the Truth of our Lord's Reſurrection, and that all proper Methods of convincing the World were neceſſary upon this Occaſion; but then it ſhould be conſidered, that our Lord, being now, after his Reſurrection, to act according to the Majeſty of the divine Nature, and not according to the Infirmities and Condeſcenſion of the human, it did not ſo well comport with the Dignity, he had aſſumed, to converſe publickly, or to ſubmit himſelf to the Cenſures, and freſh Affronts of his Enemies. But allowing it had been conſiſtent, yet the unbelieving *Jews* (eſpecially the Chief-prieſts and Rulers) were of all Men moſt unworthy to have ſo extraordinary a Way of Conviction afforded them.

They had already deſpiſed the Evidence that was given them, and not only ſo, but maliciouſly imputed the plaineſt Miracles, that ever were wrought, to the Power and Operation of the Devil. Now, if any Thing can render Men incapable of the Favour of a farther Conviction, ſuch a malicious Reſiſtance of the Evidence, which our Saviour's Miracles carried along with them, would probably do it; eſpecially if we conſider, that the greateſt of all the Miracles, which he wrought in his Life-time (I mean the raiſing *Lazarus* from the Grave, after he had been dead four Days) was ſo far from convincing them, that tho' they could not deny the Thing, they took that Occaſion to reſolve to put him to death: And there-

therefore what Reaſon was there, that *Chriſt* ſhould appear to them for their Conviction, who had conſpired to compaſs his Death, even becauſe they knew that he had raiſed one from the Dead?

But ſuppoſing, for the preſent, that our Saviour had appeared publickly to the *Jewiſh* Rulers; yet, ſince neither the Darkneſs at his Death, nor the Earthquake at his Reſurrection, neither the Declaration of the Centurion, on the one, or the Confeſſion of the Soldiers, on the other Occaſion, had wrought in them any Remorſe, we can hardly ſuppoſe, but that, had he ſo appeared, they would have offered to lay violent Hands upon him: In which Caſe, had our Saviour vaniſhed out of their Hands (as doubtleſs he would) what would they have concluded from thence, but that they had ſeen a Ghoſt, a Spectre or Apparition? And what Conviction would that have wrought, but that their Senſes had been impoſed upon by ſome magical Illuſion? And what Effect would this have had upon their Minds towards bringing them to a Belief that *Chriſt* was truly riſe? None at all.

In many of the *Jews* (eſpecially their Chief-prieſts and Elders) *the God of this World had ſo blinded their Eyes, and hardened their Hearts*, that they would not have believed one Tittle of our Saviour's Reſurrection; or, in caſe they did believe it, ſuch was their Malice and Perverſeneſs, that they would not have teſtified, that they ever had ſeen him, after his Reſurrection. Now they that are wicked enough to deny what they believe, will, at a Pinch, deny alſo what they know to be true: And therefore, ſuppoſing that our Lord had ſhewn himſelf to all his Enemies, and to all the People, and but ſome of them (eſpecially of the great Men in Authority) had denied

nied that ever they ſaw him after his Reſurrection, this would have exceedingly weakened the Teſtimony of thoſe who vouched and confeſſed it: For he that appeals to the Knowledge of another, for the Truth of a Matter of Fact, is ſo far from gaining, that he loſes Credit by the Appeal, if the other Perſon denies that he knows any thing of it. If therefore our Lord had appeared to his Perſecutors, (it being likely that his Diſciples would appeal to their Knowledge) they, by proteſting the contrary, would have gained a terrible Advantage againſt the Chriſtians, upon that Appeal. Herein therefore is manifeſt the Wiſdom of *Chriſt*, that in making Choice of particular Witneſſes, *viz.* ſuch Perſons only as would be ſo far from diſſembling their Knowledge, that they would always be ready to ſeal their Teſtimony with their Blood, he hath ſettled the *Chriſtian* Faith upon a better Foundation than if he had appeared in the Temple, or in the Midſt of *Jeruſalem*, to the whole People of the *Jews*.

The Truth is, it is not the Number of Witneſſes, but the Character and Qualifications of the Perſons, together with the Evidence itſelf, in its full Force and Circumſtances, that are chiefly to be regarded in Matters of this Nature. If but a few Men can (as the Apoſtles did) by undeniable Miracles, make it ſufficiently appear, that what they ſay is true, and that God himſelf confirms the Truth of it; they can appeal to every Man's own Senſes, before whom they work Miracles, and make every one that ſees them, a Witneſs to the Truth of their Doctrines. In this Caſe God himſelf bears witneſs to it; and what the High-prieſt ſaid upon a very different Occaſion, every Stander-by finds himſelf contained to declare in this:

this: *What need have we of any farther Witneſſes? For we ourſelves have heard of their own Mouths,* (in the miraculous Gift of Tongues) *and ſeen with our own Eyes* (in the many wonderful Works which they have publickly wrought) a full and authentick Teſtimony of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection.

And this poſſibly may ſuggeſt the Reaſon, why God permitted the Apoſtle St. *Thomas*, to be ſo ſcrupulous and doubtful in this great Article of our Faith. It might, indeed, be urged before, that our Lord had not given all the Proofs of his Reſurrection, that the Nature of the Thing was capable of; but now, when nothing is left unasked, that the moſt ſceptical Doubts could pretend to deſire; when the very Apoſtles themſelves had one of their Number, that held out a while, and they preached not this Doctrine, until his Scruples were removed; when even this Doubter himſelf was no leſs vigorous, and poſitive afterwards, in aſſerting the Truth of a Point, which nothing but Demonſtration could make him believe; this takes off all Imputation of Credulity and Eaſineſs. It ſhews that the Apoſtles proceeded with great Caution, before they embarked in the Cauſe of *Chriſtianity*, which could not but reap great Advantages from this Apoſtles Backwardneſs to believe; and therefore our Church juſtly acknowledges, that *God, in his Wiſdom, ſuffered* Thomas *to doubt, for the greater Confirmation of our Faith.* This Diſciple, in ſhort, doubted, and was ſatisfied for us all. His former Unbelief adds Strength to the Cauſe he pleads, and makes him a Witneſs, ſo much above Exception, that the Scruples which in him were Weakneſſes, in thoſe that follow him, and know his Story, will be Wilfulneſs and reſolved Infidelity.

His

His Story, indeed, and the Means, which (as we therein read) our Saviour made uſe of to convince him, will inſtruct us in this,——That whatever Changes our Saviour's glorified Body might undergo, after his Reſurrection, it was not altered, as to the Properties of a Body, whereof our outward Senſes are competent Judges: To theſe it is that our Lord appealed; by theſe he compoſed the Diſciples, ſuſpecting him to be a Phantom; by theſe he ſatisfied the Doubtful and incredulous; and by theſe the Apoſtles make it their Buſineſs to perſuade the World, when they ſo frequently teſtify, that they *had ſeen and heard him*, had *eaten and drunk with him*. But now, if our Saviour's Body was not ſubject to the ſame Laws with other corporeal Subſtances; if it could then paſs through the Doors in the manner of a Spirit, and may at this Time be, where our Senſes can diſcern nothing of it, though no other Body can be ſo; then what Satisfaction could *Thomas* receive, in feeling his Hands and Side? Or wherein would the Strength of St. *John*'s Argument lie, when he declares to his Proſelytes, *That which he had ſeen and heard, and his Hands had handled of the Word of Life?*

The Indulgence, indeed, which our Saviour gave his Apoſtles, to try all their Senſes upon him, gave them full Satisfaction, both as to the Materiality and Identity of the Body. But then, as all Philoſophy informs us, that no-body can penetrate through another, we may reaſonably infer, that when our Lord came to his Apoſtles, on purpoſe, as it were, to convince them of the Reality of his Reſurrection Body, he did not glide into the Room, like a Spirit or Phantom, but by his ſovereign Power, open the Door himſelf

(even as the the Angel did the Priſon-gates to releaſe *Peter*) ſecretly, and without the Perception of any in the Company, who might all then be at the upper End of the Room, perhaps, and employed in ſome Buſineſs, as took up their whole Attention. For, unleſs we can ſuppoſe that our Saviour deſigned to invalidate the Strength of what he ſaid and did, to convince his Apoſtles of the Truth of his Reſurrection, we cannot believe that at the ſame Time he would do a Thing (known and and obſerved by them) which would, in effect, evacuate the Force of all his Proofs.

'Tis difficult, however, to imagine the Reaſon why our Saviour ſhould ſo far condeſcend to his Apoſtles, as to ſhew his Hands and his Feet, deſiring them to handle them, when, not long before he forbad *Mary Magdalen* to touch him, becauſe he *was not yet aſcended*; unleſs we may ſuppoſe, that after his Reſurrection, he might aſcend ſeveral Times; and that his firſt Aſcenſion was immediately inſuant upon it.

Now, to make this more obvious, we muſt remember, that a little before his Paſſion, our Saviour foretold to his Apoſtles, his ſudden Aſcent to his Father, and as ſudden Deſcent to them again: *Yet a little while*, ſays he, *and ye ſhall ſee me, and again a little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me, becauſe I go to my Father*, and that afterwards, upon their Surprize, and Diſpute about the Meaning of the Expreſſion, *Jeſus ſaid unto them, do you enquire among yourſelves of what I ſaid, A little while and ye ſhall ſee me, and again, a little while and ye ſhall not ſee me: Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoice, and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your Sorrow ſhall be turned into Joy*, &c. Now, if

if we compare this Prediction with the Event, how ſad and diſconſolate the Apoſtles were, upon our Saviour's Death, and how refreſhed and joyful they were, ſoon after his Reſurrection; and conſider withal, that this Sorrow was to laſt 'till *Chriſt* had been with the Father, and then their Joy to commence; we ſhall be inclined to believe, that what our Lord would be underſtood to ſay, is, that he was to go to his Father immediately after his Reſurrection, and then very ſoon to return to his Apoſtles again, even the very ſame Day in the Evening.

And, indeed, conſidering that *Chriſt* was our High-prieſt, 'twas neceſſary for him to aſcend into Heaven, as ſoon as his Sufferings were finiſhed. For, as the High-prieſt, under the Law, was not only to ſlay the Sacrifice, but to carry the Blood, that Moment, within the Sanctuary, and there preſent it before God, to compleat the Attonement, and make Interceſſion for the People; ſo *Chriſt* having ſhed his Blood, and offered his Body on the Altar of the Croſs, was immediately to aſcend into the the heavenly Sanctuary, and there obtain for us the Remiſſion of our Sins, and all the other Benefits of his Paſſion.

But this is not all. In ſeveral Parts of Scripture, our Saviour is inveſted with a regal, as well as ſacerdotal Character; but now, if according to the Teſtimony of the ſame Scripture, he could not exerciſe any ſupreme Authority, until he was exalted to his heavenly Kingdom; if he could not *give Gifts unto Men*, until he was *aſcended up on high*; nor *ſend his holy Spirit* upon his Diſciples, *until he was glorified*, and had, by his Interceſſion, *obtained that great Promiſe of the Father*; if he could not, I ſay, adminiſter the Affairs

of his mediatorial Kingdom, before he had conquered Death by his Reſurrection, and had preſented himſelf as a ſlain Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sins of the World, before the Preſence of the divine Majeſty; this makes it evident, that on the very Day of his Reſurrection, he muſt have aſcended to Heaven, becauſe, in the Evening of that Day, we find him giving a Commiſſion and Inſtructions to his Apoſtles, promiſing them the *Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt*; bleſſing them in a ſolemn Manner; ſending them as his Father had ſent him; giving them the Power of remitting and retaining Sins; and therefore commanding them to go and teach, and baptize all Nations, and promiſing his powerful Preſence with them, even until the End of the World.

Now if the Exerciſes both of the ſacerdotal Office, and regal Power, could not properly belong to our Saviour, until his Exaltation, then we have Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that in the Morning of his Reſurrection, he privately aſcended into Heaven, to receive the Reward of his Humiliation in our Fleſh; and that the Reaſon for his forbidding *Mary* to touch him, was, that by her officious Embraces and Importunity, ſhe might not hinder him from aſcending that Moment, and (what was the Crown of all his Labour) carrying our glorified Nature, as ſoon as poſſibly he could, into that bleſſed Place, where God's majeſtick Preſence appears, and where Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers Angels, and Arch-angels have their abode.

DISSER-

DISSERTATION II.

Of our Bleſſed SAVIOUR's *Doctrine, and the Excellency of his Religion.*

THE Completion of the Prophecies, relating to the promiſed *Meſſiah*, in the Perſon and Actions of our Saviour *Chriſt*, and the Miracles which he wrought in Teſtimony of his divine Miſſion, and in Conformity to what the *Meſſiah* was to do, were the Subjects of the preceding *Diſſertations*, as the great external Evidences of the Truth of our holy Religion; and the internal Evidence is, the Goodneſs, and Perfection of thoſe Precepts, relating to Practice, which he hath enjoined; and of thoſe Doctrines relating to Faith, which he hath taught us in the Courſe of his Goſpel, and which, when duly conſidered, will manifeſt the Excellencyof the *Chriſtian* Religion, above all others.

Now the practical Part of our holy Religion, or thoſe Precepts, which were intended to direct us in our Duty towards God and Man, are ſuch, as either tend to the Perfection of human Nature, or to the Peace and Happineſs of human Society. Of thoſe, which tend to the Perfection of human Nature, ſome enjoin Piety towards God, and others require the good Government of ourſelves, with reſpect to the Pleaſures of this Life; and our Buſineſs is to ſhew that all, and every of theſe, are both

both conformable to the Dictates of right Reaſon in their Practice, and declarative of the Wiſdom of God in their Appointment.

1. That we ſhould inwardly reverence and love God, and expreſs that Reverence by external Worſhip and Adoration, and by our Readineſs to receive and obey all the Revelations of his Will; that we ſhould teſtify our Dependance upon him, and our Confidence of his Goodneſs, by conſtant Prayers and Supplications to him for Mercy and Help, both for ourſelves and others; that we ſhould acknowledge our Obligations to him for the many Favours and Benefits which, every Day, every Moment, we receive from him, by continual Praiſes and Thankſgivings; and that, on the contrary, we ſhould not entertain any unworthy Thoughts of God, nor give that Honour and Reverence, which is due to him, to any other; that we ſhould not worſhip him in any Manner that is either unſuitable to the Perfections of his Nature, or repugnant to his revealed Will; that we ſhould carefully avoid the Profanation of his Name by cuſtomary ſwearing or curſing; and take great heed, that we be not guilty of the Neglect or Contempt of his Worſhip, or of any other Thing that belongs to him: In ſhort, that we ſhould poſſeſs our Minds with ſuch a due Senſe of the Majeſty, and Holineſs, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs of God, as may make us, upon Occaſion, thoroughly fearful to offend him; of his Majeſty, leſt we affront it by being irreverent; of his Holineſs, leſt we offend it by being carnal; of his Juſtice, leſt we provoke it by being preſumptuous; and of his Goodneſs, leſt we forfeit it by being unthankful. Theſe are the general Heads of thoſe Duties, which

which every Man's Reaſon tells him he owes to God, and yet theſe are the very Things which the *Chriſtian* Religion expreſly requires of us, ſo that, in this Part of *Chriſtianity*, there is nothing, but what exactly agrees with the Reaſon of Mankind.

In reſpect to the good Government of ourſelves, amidſt the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of this Life, St. *John*, when he tells us, that *all, that is in the World is the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*, diſtributes the irregular Appetites of Men into three Kinds, *Voluptuouſneſs, Covetouſneſs*, and *Ambition*, which are anſwerable to three ſorts of tempting Objects, that are in the World, *Pleaſures, Riches*, and *Honours*; but, when our holy Religion requires of us, that *we ſhould not walk after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*; that we ſhould, in ſhort, *walk decently as in the Day, not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, not in Chambering and Wantonneſs*, but, *being holy in all Manner of Converſation, abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which war againſt the Soul*; when it gives us this ſtrict Caution, *to take heed and beware of Covetouſneſs, becauſe a Man's Life*, or the Happineſs of his Life, *conſiſteth not in the Things, which he poſſeſſeth*; and calls upon us ſo frequently *to be meek and lowly in Spirit*, and not *to mind high Things*; to *let nothing be done through vain Glory, but, in Lowlineſs of Mind, to let each eſteem others better than themſelves*; 'tis plain that it lays a Prohibition upon all ſuch irregular Appetites and Paſſions, as are the Bane of human Eaſe, and Happineſs, and enjoins ſuch Virtues and good Diſpoſitions, as are not only highly reaſonable, ſuitable to our Nature, and every way for our temporal Convenience, and Advantage, but ſuch, as diſpoſe us likewiſe to the

Practice

Practice of Piety and Religion, by purifying our Souls from the Droſs and Filth of ſenſual Delights.

2. In relation to the other Sort of Precepts, which (as we ſaid) tend to the Peace and Happineſs of human Society, they are ſuch, as enjoin all thoſe Virtues, that are apt to ſweeten the Spitits, and allay the Paſſions and Animoſities, which ſometimes happen among Men. For when our moſt holy Religion requires us, *to love our Neighbours* (i. e. every Man in the World, even our greateſt Enemies) *as ourſelves*, and, in Purſuance of this general Precept, *if it be poſſible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men*, to be *kind to one another*, ready to gratify and oblige thoſe that we converſe with, to be tender-hearted and compaſſionate to thoſe that are in Want and Miſery, and ready, upon all Occaſions, to ſupply and relieve them; to ſympathize with one another in our Joys and Sorrows, *to mourn with thoſe that mourn, and to rejoice with them them that rejoice*; *to bear one another's Burdens*; *and to forbear one another in Love*; *to be eaſily reconciled to them that have offended us*; it diſcovers itſelf not only to be the moſt innocent and harmleſs, but the moſt generous and beſt-natured Inſtitution, that ever was in the World.

In like Manner when our holy Religion endeavours to ſecure the private Intereſts of Men, as well as the publick Peace, by confirming and enforcing all the Dictates of Nature concerning Juſtice and Equity; by recommending the great Rule of doing to others what we would have them to do to us, as the Sum and Subſtance *of the Law and the Prophets*; by commanding Obedience to human

S^t. MATTHEW 5 Verſe 8.

Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.

human Laws, which decide Mens Rights, and Submiſſion to Government, under Pain of Damnation; and by forbidding whatever is contrary to theſe, *viz.* Violence and Oppreſſion, Fraud and Over-reaching, Perfidiouſneſs and Treachery, Breach of Truſts, Oaths, or Promiſes, Undutifulneſs to Superiors, Sedition and Rebellion againſt Magiſtracy and Authority; and if there be any Thing elſe, that is apt to diſturb the Peace of the World, and to alienate the Affections of Men from one another, ſuch a Sourneſs of Diſpoſition, and Rudeneſs of Behaviour, Cenſoriouſneſs, and ſiniſter Interpretation of Things; in ſhort, all croſs and diſtaſteful Humours, and whatever elſe may render Converſation uneaſy and unſociable: When the Laws of *Chriſtianity*, I ſay, forbid theſe Vices and evil Diſpoſitions, and, upon every Occaſion, command the contrary Virtues, *Whatſoever Things are true, whatſoever Things are honeſt, whatſoever Things are juſt, whatſoever Things are pure, whatſoever Things are lovely, whatſoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praiſe,* requiring us *to think of theſe Things*; we cannot but allow, that nothing can be deviſed more proper and effectual to advance the Nature of Man to its higheſt Perfection, to procure the Tranquillity of Mens Minds, to eſtabliſh the Peace and Happineſs of the World, and (if they were duly practiſed) to make it, as it were, an Heaven upon Earth, than the Precepts which we find recorded in the Goſpel: And (what is no ſmall Commendation of them) there is nothing in all theſe Precepts, but what, if we were to conſult our own Intereſt and Happineſs, we ſhould think ourſelves obliged to do, even though it were never injoined

us; nothing, in ſhort, but what is eaſy to be underſtood, and as eaſy to be practiſed by every honeſt and well-meaning Mind.

Some, indeed, have repreſented even the moral Part of the *Chriſtian* Religion, as an *heavy Burden, and grievous to be born*, difficult to be kept, and yet dangerous to be broken; that it requires us to govern, and keep under our Paſſions, to contradict our ſtrongeſt Inclinations, and, many times, to deny ourſelves even lawful Enjoyments; that it injoins us to forgive and *love our Enemies, to bleſs them that curſe us, to do good to them that hate and perſecute us*; and (what is more) that it commands us to part with all the Advantages of this World, and even to lay down Life itſelf, in the Cauſe of God, and the Diſcharge of a good Conſcience. *Hard Sayings theſe*, in ſome Mens Opinion, and ſuch as our Nature, in its State of Degeneracy, is not able to perform: But this is for want of duly conſidering the Obligation, and Tendency of ſuch Duties.

Some of the wiſeſt *Heathens*, even by the Strength of Reaſon, were able to diſcover the general Corruption of human Nature, but then they were ignorant both of the Riſe and Progreſs of it; whereas, by the *Chriſtian* Revelation, we are ſufficiently inſtructed in both. Here we find the baleful Venom of our firſt Anceſtors, Tranſgreſſion entailed on their Poſterity; here the perpetual Struggling of Fleſh and Spirit, and that Violence of Paſſions and Deſires, that ſo often carries us into Exceſſes, which our ſobber and better Senſe cannot but diſapprove; and here that general Bent to Evil, and Backwardneſs to Good, which every one (but ſuch as are obdurate and inſenſible) is

forced both to feel and lament; and therefore, ſince the Goſpel does not only ſhew us our Diſeaſe, but the Malignity and true Original of it, there is good Reaſon why it ſhould be allowed to preſs upon us the great Duties of Mortification and Self-denial, as the beſt Means, within the Compaſs of human Power, to cure us of it.

The ancient Moraliſts, though they ſometimes decry an Inſenſibility of juſt Provocations, as a Mark of an abject and little Soul, yet, upon no Occaſion are they ſo profuſe in their Praiſes, as where they ſpeak of Perſons, touched with a Senſe of Injuries and Indignities, and yet able, with a generous Contempt, to overlook, and ſhew themſelves above them; for the paſſing by, and forgetting ſuch Things, the being very hardly incenſed, and very readily appeaſed again, is conſtantly ſet forth, as one of the brighteſt Virtues, that give Luſtre to a brave and truly noble Mind. And if ſuch were the Notions of *Heathens*, who profeſſed to follow no other Guide but the Light of Reaſon, ſurely the Duty of loving and forgiving thoſe that have injured and offended us, cannot be a Task ſo very difficult to *Chriſtians*, in Matters capable of any tolerable Conſtruction, are required to put on that Charity, *which believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things*, and, in the worſt that can be, ſuch a generous Greatneſs of Mind, as *puts away from us all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking, with all Malice*; *ſuch, as ſhould make us kind and tender-hearted, reſtoring thoſe, that are overtaken in a Fault, in the Spirit of Meekneſs*; *and ſuch, as ſhould prevail with us, to forbear one another, and*

to forgive one another, even as God, for Chriſt's *Sake, hath forgiven us.*

And indeed, he who conſiders, that the very Foundation of our Religion is laid in the Belief, and Profeſſion of a Pardon extended to the higheſt of all Provocations, of Love inconceivable to the worſt of all Enemies, and both theſe expreſſed and effected by a Perſon, the moſt highly injured, and in a Method, the moſt beneficial, the moſt amazingly kind, inſomuch that no Inſtance of Generoſity, or Goodneſs beſides preſents us with any Thing like it, with any Thing near it, with any Thing fit to be named with it; He who conſiders this, I ſay, cannot but acknowledge, that the Precept of loving and forgiving our Enemies is peculiarly ſuited to the Condition of *Chriſtians*, who own all their Hopes and Happineſs to it; and that it would have been abſurd not to have obliged thoſe Men to a Virtue, which they confeſs themſelves ſo infinitely beholden to, and which no Man can think a grievous Command, who conſiders the Pleaſure and Sweetneſs of Love, the glorious Victory of overcoming *Evil with Good*, and then compares theſe with the reſtleſs Torments, and perpetual Tumults of a malicious and revengeful Spirit.

The Stoicks of old repreſented their Wiſeman, as no more concerned at the Loſs of his Eſtate, his Liberty, or Life, than if they were the Rattles, or Gewgaws of a Child, which might afford him ſome little Eaſe, and preſent Diverſion indeed, but were by no means eſſential, or, in any Degree, neceſſary to his real Happineſs. This however is a Flight too romantick to be credited. To lay down this Life, and all the Comforts of it, while

while Men were ſo much in the Dark about another; and to expoſe the Body to Sufferings, when doubtful, and in Diſtruſt about the Soul, is too great an Infraction upon *Self-preſervation*; becauſe it is to part wtth one's All, at leaſt, our All in Certainty and Opinion: But to do this, when Men know the Reality of a future State, and the Value of their immortal Souls; *To fear him, who when he hath killed, can caſt Body and Soul into Hell*, rather than them, *who can only kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do*; to receive, embrace, rejoice in *the light Affliction which is but for a Moment*, when thoroughly perſuaded, that *it worketh out for us a far more exceeding, and eternal Weight of Glory*; that is, not to deſtroy, but to ſave and profit ourſelves, and what, in the Affairs of this World, we eſteem it our Wiſdom to do every Day.

If, by any ſad Accident, our Houſe happens to be ſet on fire, no Man is to be blamed for doing his beſt to ſave his Goods; but when that is found impracticable, every wiſe Man will chuſe to leave all, and eſcape naked, rather than, out of a fooliſh Fondneſs for any Furniture of Value or Curioſity, there ſtay, and periſh with it. Now, this is no improper Emblem of the Caſe before us. When the Fire of Perſecution breaks out among us, we have our Lord's Permiſſion, by all prudent and honourable Methods, to decline it; but when it comes at laſt to catch upon theſe earthly Tabernacles, *i. e.* when our Circumſtances admit of no other Choice, but either *ſinning* or *ſuffering*, the Loſs of our *Lives*, or the Loſs of our *Virtue*, we owe it then, not only to God, but to ourſelves, rather to quit this Houſe of Fleſh, than bring the glorious

glorious Inhabitant in it into Danger of being buried in its Ruins.

2. The other Part of the *Chriſtian* Religion is (as we ſaid before) thoſe Doctrines, which were deſigned for the Direction of our Faith in Matters that were not ſufficiently revealed before.

That there is one ſupreme, abſolute, and independent *Cauſe*, and Original of all Things, eternal, infinite, all-powerful, all-ſufficient, the Maker and Lord of all Things, himſelf derived from none, made of none, begotten of none, proceeding from none; that by him all Creatures, material and immaterial, viſible and inviſible, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, mortal and immortal, in Heaven and in Earth, were made, or created out of nothing; that having made the World at firſt, he ſtill governs it by his perpetual Providence, inſomuch that the moſt fortuitous Accident does not happen, *a Sparrow does not fall to the Ground, nor an Hair from our Heads*, without his Permiſſion or Direction; that, in the Exerciſe of this his Providence, every Thing is ſubmitted to his Will; no Strength can reſiſt his Power, no Swiftneſs can flee his Preſence, no Secrecy can conceal from his Knowledge, no Art can evade his Juſtice, and every Creature participates of his Goodneſs; that this infinite and Almighty Being did, from all Eternity, and long before any Ages commenced, in an ineffable Manner, (which the Scriptures call *Generation*) communicate the Eſſence of the Godhead ſo intirely to his Son, as to make him the ſame with himſelf, *very God of very God*; that this eternal Son of God, having a Being in the *Boſom of his Father*, was Partaker of his Glory and Power in the Creation and Government of

of the World; and, by the divine Appointment, is our *Savior*, *Mediator*, *Interceſſor*, and *Judge*; that, having a tender Compaſſion for ſinful Man, and willing to procure for him the Grace of *Repentance*, he voluntarily condeſcended to take our Nature, with all its innocent Infirmities upon him; that, in this Nature, (miraculouſly conceived, and born of a Virgin) he lived a life as we do, and was affected as we are, but without Sin; revealed unto us his Father's Will, and did many wonderful Works in Confirmation of his divine Miſſion; that, after a Life ſpent in doing good, he ſubmitted, in his human Nature, to a painful and ignominious Death, that thereby he might make an Attonement to God, and Reconciliation for our Sins; that, after a Stay of three Days in the Grave, by his Almighty Power, he raiſed himſelf to Life again, converſed upon Earth for the Space of forty Days, inſtructed his Diſciples in Matters relating to his Kingdom, and, at length, in the Sight of a great Number of Spectators, aſcended viſibly into Heaven; that, upon his Aſcenſion, he was exalted to the Right-hand of God, where he now makes Interceſſion for us, and inveſted with all Power and Authority, wherewith he governs the whole Church, and is hereafter to judge the whole World; that upon his Inveſtiture, he ſoon ſent down the *Holy Ghoſt* (the Third Perſon in the ever bleſſed Trinity) to be the immediate Comforter, and Director of his Apoſtles, to *lead them into all Truth*, to inſpire them with the Gift of Tongues, and to impart to their Followers ſuch other Gifts, as might beſt ſerve the End of their Miniſtry; that this Bleſſed Spirit ſtill continues with all good Men, and by illuminating their Underſtandings,

derſtandings, rectifying their Wills and Affections, renewing their Natures, uniting their Perſons to *Chriſt*, and helping the Infirmities of their Prayers with his own Interceſſion, is the great Sanctifier of their Souls and Bodies, to their full and eternal Acceptation in the Sight of God: Theſe (together with the Doctrines of the Immortality of the Soul, the Reſurrection of the Body, and, after their Re-union, an eternal State of Miſery or Happineſs in the other World) are the great and fundamental Principles of the *Chriſtian* Religion, and Myſteries (as the Apoſtle calls them) *which have been hid from Ages, and from Generations, but are now made manifeſt to the Saints.*

"But how are theſe Things made manifeſt (ſays "the Objector preſently) when, notwithſtanding "all the pretended Light of Revelation, they "ſtill remain obſcure and unintelligible? Some "Articles of the *Chriſtian* Faith, ſuch as the Exiſtence of a God, the Diſpenſations of Providence, the Spirituality of our Souls, a future "State, and future Judgment, we readily allow, "becauſe theſe are founded in the Nature of "Things, and riſe in the Mind upon the Diſquiſitions of Reaſon; but, as for the Stories of a "Trinity in Unity, a Co-equality in the Son, the "Incarnation of a God, and the Propitiation "made by the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*, of theſe we can "frame no manner of Conception, *and therefore "you muſt excuſe us, if we do not believe them; for "where is the Crime of not performing Impoſſibilities, or of not believing what does not appear to "be true?*"

It cannot be denied indeed, but that, in the *Chriſtian* Religion, there are many great Myſteries,

ries, or Doctrines of too much Sublimity for the Powers of Reaſon, unaſſiſted by Revelation, to find out, or, when diſcovered, fully to comprehend; but this is no more than what we might reaſonably expect, conſidering the Nature and Quality of the Things it treats of. In its main Intendment, it is a kind of Comment upon the divine Nature, or an Inſtrument to convey right Conceptions to the Soul of Man, as far as it is capable of receiving them. But now God, we know, is an infinite Being, without any Bounds or Limitations of his Eſſence; wonderful in his Actions, inconceivable in his Purpoſes, and inexpreſſible in his Attributes; and how can ſuch vaſt and mighty Things be crouded in a little finite Underſtanding? How ſhall our poor, ſhort Faculties, be able to meaſure the Lengths of his Eternity, the Breadth and Expanſions of his Immenſity, the Heights of his Preſcience, the Depth of his Decrees, and, leaſt of all, the unutterable incomprehenſible Myſtery of two Natures united into one Perſon, and again of one and the ſame Nature diffuſed into a triple Perſonality? When a Man, that is born blind (as one expreſſes it) ſhall be able, on Hearſay, to conceive in his Mind all the Varieties and Curioſities of Colours, or to draw an exact Scheme of ſome fine City, or Map of ſome large Province, then may we expect, in this degenerate State of our Underſtanding, to comprehend the Ways of the Almighty, and *by ſearching find out God:* But (to do Juſtice to the Argument on the other Side) as it would be extreamly fooliſh and irrational, for a blind Man to affirm, that there is no ſuch Thing as Colours, or Lines, or Pictures, becauſe he finds that he cannot form in his Mind any

true Perception of them; ſo would it be equally, if not ſuperlatively more unreaſonable, for us to deny the great Myſteries of our Faith, becauſe the Plummet of our Reaſon will not reach them.

Wiſh therefore we may, that Religion were leſs difficult to us, but, at the ſame Time, we ought to remember, that we wiſh away that, which, in reality, is Religion's preſent Commendation, as well as an Ingredient of our future Happineſs. For, as it is Eaſineſs of Acceſs that many Times lays a Man open to Contempt, and a thorough Inſpection into the Secrets of any Object, that is apt to make us neglect it; ſo, to protect our Religion from rude Encroachments, by impreſſing an Awe and reverential Fear upon our Minds, God has thought proper to hedge it in (as it were) with a ſacred and majeſtick Obſcurity; and, in ſome Parts of it, to exhibit ſuch ſublime Truths as tranſcend the Reach of human Wiſdom; thereby to humble the Pride and Haughtineſs of our Reaſon; and thereby to engage us in a cloſer and more diligent Search into ſuch Subjects, as will, every Moment, furniſh us with new Matter to entertain the buſieſt Contemplation, even to the utmoſt Period of human Life.

While therefore we continue in this State, we muſt be content *to know in Part:* A full and adequate Perception of the Myſteries of our Religion is reſerved, as a principal Ingredient of our Felicity and Happineſs above, when all the Heights and Depths, which we now ſtand amazed at, ſhall be made clear and familiar to us; when God ſhall diſplay the hidden Glories of his Nature, the Wonders of his Providence, and the Wiſdom of his Counſels; and with-all, ſortify the Eye of the

Soul

Soul to ſuch a Degree, as to make it able (as far as the Capacities of an human Intellect can be able) to behold, and take them in.

To have a right Notion of the Doctrines of our Religion however, we are to diſtinguiſh between thoſe Things that are *above Reaſon*, and incomprehenſible, and thoſe that are *againſt Reaſon*, and utterly inconceivable. Some Things are above Reaſon, becauſe of their tranſcendent Excellency and Diſtance from us; whereas thoſe that are againſt Reaſon, involve a Contradiction, and have a natural Repugnancy to our Underſtandings, which cannot conceive any Thing that is formally impoſſible. And from hence it will follow, that though we neither can, nor ſhould believe thoſe Things that are contrary to our Reaſon, yet we both may, and ought to believe thoſe, that are above it: And the Reaſon is, becauſe the only Evidence we can give of our acknowledging the infallible Truth of God, is by aſſenting to what he affirms upon his own Authority.

In aſſenting to a Propoſition, whoſe Truth we perceive from the Reaſon of the Thing, we do not aſſent unto any Authority at all. To ſuch a Propoſition we ſhould aſſent, though it were affirmed by the moſt fallible Man, nay, though it were affirmed by the moſt notorious Liar; and, conſequently, our aſſenting to ſuch a Propoſition is no manner of Proof, that we acknowledge the infallible Veracity of God. This can only appear by our aſſenting to a Propoſition, whoſe Truth we do not perceive by any Evidence from the Nature of the Thing; for here we aſſent upon the ſimple Authority of God's Affirmation, and our Aſſent is an explicit Acknowledgment of his abſolute Ve-

racity. If then it be reaſonable to expect, in a Divine Revelation, that God ſhould require our Acknowledgment of this Attribute eſpecially (and without ſuch Acknowledgment no Revelation would be of any uſe) and if this Acknowledgment can appear only by our Aſſenting, upon the Authority of God, to ſuch Propoſitions as we cannot perceive the Truth of by any internal Evidence, it certainly cannot be incongruous to expect ſuch Propoſitions in a divine Revelation: Nay, much more incongruous would it be, and a probable Objection againſt the Divinity of any Revelation, if we ſhould not find ſome Propoſitions of this kind in it, becauſe it is hardly conceivable, why God ſhould make an external Revelation of thoſe Things only, which, by a due Exerciſe of Reaſon he has enabled us to find out.

Seeing it is ſo far from being unreaſonable then, that it is highly expedient, and in ſome ſort neceſſary, that there ſhould be ſome Propoſitions above the Reach of human Underſtanding, in every Revelation, that comes from God; if we can but ſhew, that in the *Chriſtian* Syſtem there are no Doctrines, but ſuch as ſtand clear of all Abſurdity and Contradiction, the more abſtruſe and myſterious they are, the more they deſerve our Belief, for this very Reaſon; becauſe, if what is revealed concerning God were every way eaſy, and adapted to our Comprehenſion, it could never reach, nor, with any Fitneſs, repreſent that Nature, which we all allow to be incomprehenſible.

The holy Scriptures, for Inſtance, teach us, that in the Divine Nature (which can be but *one*) there are *three* diſtinct Perſons, to whom we aſcribe the ſame Attributes and Perfections, the ſame Worſhip and

and Adoration. This indeed is a Doctrine above our Comprehenſion, as to the Manner, how *three* ſhould be *one*, and *one three*; but ſtill we affirm, that there is no Contradiction in it, if we will but diſtinguiſh between *Numbers*, and the *Nature* of Things. For *three* to be *one* indeed is a Contradiction in Numbers, but whether an infinite Nature can communicate itſelf to three different *Subſiſtences*, without ſuch a Diviſion, as is among created Beings, muſt not be determined by bare Numbers, but by the abſolute Perfections of the Divine Nature, which muſt be owned to be above our Comprehenſion. The holy Scriptures teach us, that the Son of God was *made Fleſh, and dwelt amongſt us*, and that therefore our Redeemer was both God and Man in one Perſon. This, we own, is, in its Nature, one of the great *Myſteries of Godlineſs*, as St. *Paul* calls it; but then we muſt remember, that, in reality, it is not much more difficult than the Union of the Soul and Body in all Mankind; which, however unaccountable it may be to our Reaſon and Imagination, it is too certain in Fact to be called in Queſtion. Once more, the holy Scriptures teach us, that our Saviour *Chriſt*, who was both God and Man in one Perſon, became the Redeemer of the World, by offering himſelf *a Propitiation to God for Sinners*. This, in many reſpects, is a Myſtery too, and what we could not have known, had it not been revealed to us; but now, that it is revealed, 'tis far from deſerving the Imputation of being abſurd. That all Mankind are Sinners, and fallen from their primitive Integrity, not only the Scriptures, but the conſtant Experience of our own irregular Appetites is but too convincing a Demonſtration.

Now

Now, ſince this was our Condition, and God was minded to reſcue us from it, but entirely at Liberty in what Method to effect it; ſince the Soul of our Saviour *Chriſt* was a free immaculate Being, that might voluntarily ſuffer for us, if he pleaſed; and by the Dignity of his Nature, inhance the Value of his Sufferings to the full Pardon of our Sins, upon his Father's Acceptance of a vicarious Sacrifice; there appears nothing in this Doctrine of *Chriſt*'s Satisfaction (now that we have it fully revealed to us) but what correſponds with common Reaſon, and all judicial Proceedings among Mankind.

Theſe are ſome of the principal Doctrines, that we (as *Chriſtians*) profeſs; and ſeeing they are free (when rightly conſidered) from all Appearance of Contradiction, we may appeal to the Judgment of any conſiderate Perſon, whether it be not for the Dignity and Advantage of Religion, that ſome Articles of it ſhould exceed the largeſt human Comprehenſion: Whether we ſhould entertain the ſame awful Impreſſions of the divine Majeſty, if the Perfections of his Nature and Operations were only ſuch, as we could ſee to the End of: Whether it does not raiſe the Value of Man's Redemption, to have it brought about by Miracles of Mercy, not only without Example, but even beyond our preſent Underſtanding. Had all theſe Things been leſs, we ſhould indeed have known them better; but then ſo much as we abate of their Myſteriouſneſs, to bring them down to our Capacity, ſo much we impair of their Dignity, and weaken the Power of them upon our Affections. It is therefore the very Commendation (as we ſaid before) and Excellency of theſe Doctrines, that they

they are ſo far above us; and we ought to eſteem it an Inſtance of the Divine Goodneſs, no leſs than Wiſdom, ſo to have tempered his Revelations, that we want no Knowledge, enough to engage our Piety and holy Wonder, and yet have not ſo much, as ſhould deſtroy our Humility and godly Reverence; and, upon the whole, have Reaſon to believe, that it could not have been better, nay, probably not near ſo well, if either leſs had been diſcovered to us, or leſs concealed from us.

The other Doctrines, which, in ſome meaſure, were diſcoverable by the Strength of Reaſon, but have been ſet in full Light, and cleared of all their Ambiguity and Doubtfulneſs by the Revelation of the Goſpel, ſuch as that of the Being of a God, the Inſpection of his Providence, the ſupreme End of Man, the Immortality of his Soul, the Reſurrection of his Body, a future Judgment, and an eternal State of Happineſs or Miſery hereafter, are ſo rational in themſelves, and have ſo natural a Tendency to what is the great End of all Religion, the Reformation of Mens Lives and Tempers, that a very ſmall Illuſtration will ſuffice to recommend them. For,

What can be a more neceſſary and excellent Foundation of true Religion, than that Doctrine, which the *Chriſtian* Religion clearly and diſtinctly teaches us, concerning the Nature and Attributes of *the only true God, who inhabits Eternity, and yet humbleth himſelf to behold the Things that are in Heaven and Earth?* What can afford more Comfort and Security in all Conditions of Life, than the Senſe of a *Providence* (by which the very *Hairs of our Head are numbered*) concerning itſelf for our Welfare, and, for that Reaſon, bidding us *to*

be

be careful for nothing, but, in every Thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, to make our Requeſts known unto God? What can be a more effectual Means to wean us from the Love of the World, and the Allurements of Sin, than to conſider, that the proper and ultimate End of Man is the Fruition of God, and that, tho' it does *not yet appear what we ſhall be*, yet *this we know, that when he ſhall appear we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is?* What a greater Incitement to Purity and Holineſs, to Love, and Hope, and Heavenly-mindedneſs, than the Aſſurance given us in the Goſpel, that, when we are *diſſolved*, we ſhall immediately be with *Chriſt*; that *this Corruptible ſhall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal put on Immortality*, that our Souls, when they go hence, *return to the God that gave them*; and our Bodies, when laid in the Duſt, after a ſhort Repoſe, are to be *raiſed in Power, and faſhioned like unto* Chriſt' *glorious Body?* In fine, what ſtronger and more powerful Motive to deter us from Vice, and allure us to all kind of Virtue, than the Diſcovery we have of God's having *appointed a Day, wherein he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, and render unto every Man according to his Works; to them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life; but unto them that are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man, that doeth Evil.* So that the Articles of our *Chriſtian* Faith, you ſee, are far from being arbitrary Impoſitions, calculated for the Exerciſe of our Credulity, or the Gratification of our idle Curioſity, but have an immediate Relation

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A blind Begger sitting by the Road-side, where Jesus passed, enquired who he was. Luke 18. 36, 37.

to Practice. They are indeed the genuine Principles and Foundations of all human and divine Virtues; and, taken altogether, make a far more rational and conſiſtent Scheme of Belief, than what the wiſeſt ancient Philoſopher ever thought of, or the moſt opinionative modern Unbeliever ever yet contrived.

But beſides theſe Doctrines, there are two Ordinances peculiar to the *Chriſtian* Religion, which have an equal Tendency to Practice, and are ſo far from being vain and and ſuperſtitious (as ſome are pleaſed to call them) that they carry their own Plea and Juſtification along with them. For, what reaſonable Man can pretend to ſay, that it is any way ſuperſtitious for every Member of the Society, which *Chriſt* has inſtituted, to be ſolemnly admitted into the Profeſſion of his Religion, by a plain and ſignificant Rite, intitling him to all the Privileges, and charging him with all the Obligations, which belong to the Members of that Society, as ſuch; which is the Deſign of one of the Sacraments: or that it is unreaſonable, or ſuperſtitious, for Men frequently to commemorate, with all due Thankfulneſs, the Love of their greateſt Benefactor, and humbly and ſolemnly to renew their Obligations and Promiſes of Obedience to him, which is the Deſign of the other? But then, if we conſider farther the manifold Benefits which we receive from theſe ſacramental Ordinances; that, by the former, we are admitted to the Pardon of all our Sins, the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace, the Adoption of Sons, and a Title to a glorious Inheritance; and that, by the latter, we have the Covenant of Mercy renewed, our Breaches repaired, and our Right to eternal Happineſs confirmed;

that, in both, in ſhort, we are made and recognized to be the *Children of God*, and *if Children, then* (according to that happy *Climax*) *are we Heirs, Heirs with God, and joint Heirs with* Chriſt, *to the Intent, that we may be glorified with him*; if we conſider theſe great Privileges, I ſay, we ſhall ſoon perceive the Wiſdom and Love of our Maſter and only Saviour, in thus *opening to us a Fountain for Sin, and for Uncleanneſs*, and in thus giving to us the *Medicine of Immortality*, (as the Ancients ſtile the *Euchariſt*) *an Antidote to preſerve Men from dying, and to give them a Life, that is everlaſting.*

But, whatever inherent Efficacy ſome may think fit to aſcribe, or deny to theſe ſacred Ordinances, it can hardly be thought, but that, ſince (when they are duly obſerved) they are productive of many Virtues and good Diſpoſitions; ſince, in the Sacrament of Baptiſm, we profeſs our ſincere Belief in the Truth of that Doctrine, which God the Father revealed by his bleſſed Son, and confirmed by the miraculous Operations of the *Holy Ghoſt*; in it declare our humble Acceptance of the Overtures of Mercy and Grace, purchaſed for us by our Saviour, and in this Sacrament exhibited to us; in it acknowledge our Obligations to all Piety, Righteouſneſs, and Sobriety, as loyal Subjects, faithful Servants, and dutiful Children to God; and in it devote ourſelves to the Faith and Obebience of God the Father, our great and glorious Maker; of God the Son, our great and gracious Redeemer; and of God the Holy Ghoſt, our bleſſed Guide and Comforter: And, in like Manner, ſince a devout Reception of the Supper of our Lord, exerciſes and excites in us an awful Senſe of

of Mind, anſwerable to the Greatneſs and Holineſs of him, whom, at that Time, we approach; an hearty Contrition for our Sins, which expoſed our Saviour to ſuch Pains and Agonies, as are therein remembered; a fervent Love and Gratitude to him, for his wonderful Goodneſs and Love to us; a deep Humility, upon the Senſe of our Unworthineſs to receive ſuch Teſtimonies of his Favour; a pious Joy, in Conſideration of the excellent Fruits accrueing to us from his Performances; a comfortable Hope of obtaining the Benefits of his Paſſion, by the Aſſiſtance of his Grace; and, laſtly, an enlarged Good-will and Charity to all our Brethren, as being made Heirs of the ſame Hope, and not only waſhed in the ſame Baptiſm, but fed at the ſame Table with ourſelves; ſince theſe, I ſay, are the Graces and Benefits which accrue to us by theſe holy Ordinances, we cannot but applaud the Wiſdom of their Inſtitution, which affords ſuch mighty Helps to our *Chriſtian* Progreſs; and, by the Bleſſing of God, are the happy Inſtruments both of our living well, and our living for ever.

From this brief Review of the *Chriſtian* Religion, it appears, that the Purity and Practicableneſs of its Precepts, the Truth and Sublimity of its Doctrines, and the Wiſdom and Piety of its ſacramental Inſtitutions, cannot but recommend it to every Man's Conſcience, that is neither bribed with Vice, nor tinctured with Infidelity; for, *if our Goſpel be hid*, if the Beauty and Excellency of our holy Religion be hid, *it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them who believe not, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of* Chriſt (who is the Image of God) *ſhould ſhine unto them.*

And now, methinks we may, with ſome Confidence, challenge any Religion in the World, to ſhew us ſuch a compleat Body and Collection of Doctrines, both ſpeculative and practical; of Myſteries more ſublime, and rational withal; more agreeable to the divine Nature, and more perfective of human Underſtanding; and of Rules and Precepts, that would make Men more pious and devout, more holy and ſober, more juſt and fair in their Dealings, better Friends, and better Neighbours, better Magiſtrates, better Subjects, and better in all Relations, than what we find recorded in the Goſpel.

Were there no other Argument of the Divinity of the *Chriſtian* Religion, but only the Excellency of the Doctrines which it teaches, this would be enough to convince any conſidering Man, that it came from God. For, if it were nothing elſe but the Reſult of natural Reaſoning, why ſhould not other Religions in the World, and other Syſtems of Morality be as good as this? How comes the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt* to excel thoſe of all the famous Legiſlators and Philoſophers in the World? How comes an obſcure Perſon in *Judea* to draw up ſuch an admirable Scheme of *Ethicks*, that all that is laid down by the *Lycurgus's*, and *Numa's*, and *Plato's*, and *Ariſtotle's*, ſhould not be comparable to it? How ſhould he, in one or two Years Preaching, nay, in one ſhort Sermon, advance the practical Doctrines to a greater Height and Perfection, than ever they were brought to by any of the Sects of Philoſophers, who had made it their Buſineſs to ſtudy them for ſome Ages? Moſt certainly, unleſs God had been aſſiſting in contriving this new Model of the Morality of *Jeſus Chriſt*, it

it is impoſſible that it could ever have equalled, much leſs ſo far exceeded, that of the *Grecian* Schools, which had all the human Advantages, that he wanted, on their Side.

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that almoſt in every Age, there have been, in the heathen World, ſome wiſe, brave, and good Men, who have carried human Reaſon to a great Height, and in the Study and Diſquiſition of natural Religion, have made no mean Diſcoveries; but then there is room to ſuſpect, that their Diſcoveries of this Kind were not ſo much owing to the Strength and Sagacity of their own Reaſon, as to the Traditions they might receive from their Anceſtors, or the Converſation they might have with the *Hebrews*, who had all their Inſtructions from Revelation.

That there were certain Principles delivered by God to *Noah*, and by him propagated among his Poſterity, through all Ages and Nations, is what we may eaſily conceive; and thence we may ſuppoſe, that many Points, which ſeem now to be Deductions from natural Reaſon, might have their Original from Revelation, becauſe Things once diſcovered, may ſeem eaſy and obvious to Men, which they, notwithſtanding, would never of themſelves have been able to find out.

However this be, 'tis certain, that as the antient Philoſophers might borrow many Helps from their Knowledge of the *Jewiſh* Religion, which was the only Revelation they pretended to; ſo whoever compares the Writings of later Philoſophers, of *Epictetus*, *Antonius*, and ſome others, who lived ſince the Goſpel got Footing in the World, with theirs who went before them, will find

find ſo manifeſt a difference, ſo much more unaffected Solidity, and ſo near a Reſemblance to ſome of the moſt exalted *Chriſtian* Precepts, as can not well be accounted for, without ſuppoſing ſome Acquaintance with a Set of Principles, which they could not but approve and admire, and affected to engraft into their own Syſtems of Morality, tho' they never expreſly avowed the Authority on which they ſtand. Theſe were great Helps; and it is no Wonder, that under the Influence of theſe they wrote ſo well: But if we look into the Tracts of thoſe that went before them, and were unaſſiſted by Revelation, we ſhall find them miſerably ignorant of many important Points that are delivered to us with the greateſt Perſpicuity.

And, if the Pagan Religion, when ſupported with the higheſt Improvements of human Underſtanding, fell ſo far ſhort of being a rational Service, what ſhall we ſay to the *Mahometan*, which invelops itſelf in Ignorance, and makes its main Foundation the Gratification of Men's brutal Luſts and Appetites? One would really wonder how ſo corrupt an Inſtitution came to ſpread ſo wide in the World, but that there was a Concurrence of Circumſtances, at that Time, which did not a little contribute to its Propagation.

This we muſt obſerve, however, that God does not always approve thoſe Actions and Deſigns, which, to demonſtrate the Wiſdom of his Providence, he is ſometimes pleaſed to permit and proſper; that a Religion propagated by Force, and ſupported by Methods of external Strength, is ſo far deſtitute of any Proof, that its Original is from Heaven; and that, when it contains ſuch Doctrines as are repugnant to the Dictates of right Reaſon,

Reaſon, or the known Properties and Attributes of God, it can be the Product of nothing elſe but human Invention.

When therefore we find *Mahomet* eſtabliſhing his Religion by the Dint of the Sword, perſecuting with War all that would not ſubmit to it, and threatning, with no leſs than Death, all that pretended to diſpute the leaſt Article of it; whereas the *Chriſtian*, quite otherwiſe, was planted in Weakneſs and Diſgrace, in Tears, and Prayers, and Patience, and watered with the Blood of many thouſands of its Profeſſors: When we find him allowing of Fornication, juſtifying Adultery, and talking of War, Rapine and Slaugher, as Things enjoined and commanded by Almighty God; whereas, what we have learnt from *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, is, *to poſſeſs every one his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour, not in the Luſt of Concupiſcence; to live peaceably with all Men*; and inſtead of invading any other's Property, *to take joyfully the Spoiling of our Goods, knowing, that we have in Heaven, a better and enduring Subſtance:* When we find him, the better to allure his Followers, telling them of pleaſant Gardens, curious Fountains, delicate Beds, and beautiful Women with black Eyes and fair Complexions, in Paradiſe, with whom they ſhall enjoy continual Pleaſures, and ſolace themſelves with amorous Delights to all Eternity; whereas we are told, that in the Reſurrection, we *neither marry, nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels of God in Heaven*, where we ſhall come to Company, ſuitable to our glorified Natures, *To the general Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born, to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, to an innumerable*

merable Company of Angels, to God the Judge of all, and to Jeſus *the Mediator of the new Covenant*, Heb. xii. 23, 24. When we compare theſe Things together, I ſay, we ſhall find the one, abhorrent to the Nature of God, injurious to the Dignity of the human, and a Contradiction to that eternal Law of Righteouſneſs, which is written in every Man's Breaſt; but the other agreeable to the Notions we have of the ſupreme Being, and conſonant to the rational Dictates of our Nature.

If we proceed to compare the Tranſactions of *Chriſt*'s Life, with thoſe that are related of *Mahomet*; how our *Saviour went about doing good, healing all Manner of Diſeaſe among the People, giving Sight to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, and Life to the Dead*; how the Miracles, which he wrought, were ſolemn and grave; Acts of his Love to Mankind, and Demonſtrations of his Omnipotence; and how thoſe, who embraced his Religion, in virtue of thoſe Miracles, were Men of Innocence and Simplicity, who lived good Lives, and feared God, and were therefore, under the divine Protection, ſecured from the Deceivableneſs of Error; whereas the Followers of *Mahomet* were a Gang of Robbers and Plunderers, void of all Piety, and all Humanity; himſelf a bold ambitious Man, greedy of Empire, and reſolved to raiſe himſelf, even at the Deſtruction of his Fellow-creatures; and the Miracles reported of him, (ſuch as his cleaving the Moon in two; the Trees going out to meet him; the Stones ſaluting him; the *Camel* and the *Shoulder of Mutton* ſpeaking to him; and his wonderful Journey to Heaven, with all the ſtrange Sights, he there beheld) are to the higheſt

higheſt Degree abſurd and ridiculous: If we compare theſe Things together, I ſay we ſhould ſoon perceive, in whom the Characters of a true Prophet meet, and who is to be deemed the wicked Impoſtor, whoſe Religion was intended to civilize and ſanctify human Nature, and conſequently is the Gift of God; and whoſe calculated to gratify the cruel and carnal Appetites of rude Barbarians, and conſequently, was the Forgery of Man.

The *Jewiſh* Religion, indeed, derived its Origin from Heaven, and *Moſes* ſeems to glory in the Excellence of its Inſtitutes, when he asks the People, *What Nation is there ſo great, that has Statutes and Judgments ſo righteous, as all this Law which I ſet before you this Day?* And yet, if we were to deſcend to an Examination, we ſhould ſoon perceive, in many great Diſcoveries, the Pre-eminence of the Goſpel above the Law.

1. That there is a God, and that there is but one God; that the only one God is incorporeal, inviſible, immortal, eternal, omnipotent, omniſcient, of infinite Juſtice, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, the ſupreme Governor of the World, and of all Things therein, and a gracious Rewarder of thoſe that ſeek him, is abſolutely neceſſary to be known by all, who would attain eternal Life; and it cannot be doubted, but that the Faithful, from the Beginning, had this Knowledge of God: But then, before the Coming of *Chriſt*, they had not ſo certain, ſo clear, and ſo diſtinct a Knowledge of theſe Things, as we have now under the Goſpel. For over and above the Knowledge of theſe Things, which the Pious, before *Moſes* had, either from a ſerious Contemplation of the Works of God, or from the Tra-

dition and Inſtruction of the Patriarchs, and which the *Jews*, in ſucceeding Ages, had from the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets; we *Chriſtians* have a more diſtinct and evident Manifeſtation thereof, from the Books of the *Evangeliſts* and *Apoſtles*.

The Faithful under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, did, without doubt, believe God to be an inviſible and omnipreſent Spirit; and yet his frequent Appearance ſometimes under one Reſemblance, and ſometimes under another, the Building of an Ark, a Tabernacle and Temple, whither he was pleaſed to call his People together into his immediate Preſence, and to talk with them (as *Moſes* expreſſes it) Face to Face, muſt neceſſarily turn their Eyes and Minds towards the Mercy-ſeat; make them apprehend God ſhut up, as it were, within the *Holy of Holies*, and conſequently perplex and obſcure their Notions of his Spirituality and Omnipreſence: Whereas there is no room now, under the Goſpel, for any groſs Conceptions of the Deity, when we are called upon not to turn our Eyes towards a viſible Tabernacle, but *to pray every where*, in any Place, *lifting up holy Hands*; and are taught by *Chriſt, that God is a Spirit, and that they, who worſhip him, worſhip him in Spirit and Truth.*

The Believers under the Law, were perſuaded that all Things were ordered and governed by an all-wiſe and all-powerful Being; and yet the moſt ſagacious of them were not able to account for the Juſtice of divine Providence, in ſuffering the Wicked to proſper, and the Righteous to be afflicted. But now this Difficulty every common *Chriſtian* is able to ſolve, by the Help of

Of ten Lepers that were cleanſed, only one returns Glory to God. Luke 17. 18.

what he has learned from the Goſpel, concerning the Retributions of a future State, and can apply to all ſuch Caſes the Reflection made by *Abraham* on the rich Man's Deſire of ſome Relief from *Lazarus*, *Son, remember that thou, in thy Life-Time, receiveſt thy good Things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *evil Things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

2. The Nature and Obliquity of Sin is, what Men, in all Ages, could not but perceive; but how to account for its Cauſe and Origin, they were at a ſtrange Loſs: And therefore ſome imagined a pre-exiſtent State, from whence they brought Depravity along with them, while others deviſed two contrary Principles, equally actuating the World, the one Author of all the Good, and the other of all the Evil they did. *The Wickedneſs of Man,* (as *Moſes* tells us) *was great in the Earth, and every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was evil continually*; but whether theſe Expreſſions are to be extended to the whole Race of Mankind, and ſo are a Proof of the general Depravation, has been doubted by ſome: Whereas all ſuch Doubts muſt now be ſilenced by the plain Aſſertions in the *New-Teſtament*, that *by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin*, Rom. v. 21. ſo that *by the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all Men to Damnation*, Ver. 18. that all who are of the Race of Mankind, *are Sinners, ungodly, Enemies of God, Children of the Devil, and by Nature the Children of Wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. that *when they would do good, evil is preſent with them, having a Law in their Members warring againſt the Law of their Mind, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin*, Rom. vii. 21, 23. and

that this is the State of depraved Nature, wherein Men are born, and wherein thoſe that live and die, ſhall *be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.*

3. And as the Goſpel gives us a more diſtinct Account of the Origin and Demerit of Sin, ſo does it furniſh us with a clearer Diſcovery of the Method, whereby the Guilt of it is attoned. Thoſe who lived under the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation, were ſaved by the ſame Means of Redemption, as we who live under the *Evangelical*; but the Myſtery of our common Redemption was not, in any Degree, ſo fully manifeſted to them, as it is to us: And hence it is that the Apoſtle compares the Writings of the *Old-Teſtament* to a Light, or (as the Original is) to a *Candle ſhining in a dark Place*, but the Revelation, which was made by *Chriſt* in the Goſpel, to the Day-dawn, and the *Day-ſtar riſing in our Hearts.* The Revelation made to the *Jews*, was to them a Light, but a faint one; it ſhone, but in a dark Place. The Nativity, Life, and Death of *Chriſt*, the ſeveral Offices of his Mediatorſhip, the Remiſſion of our Sins thro' his Blood, the Sanctification of our Hearts by his Spirit, and the Glories of the World to come, were taught them, not in Words at length, but in Figures, and a dark Veil was over the Writings as well as over *the Face of* Moſes, *ſo that the Children of* Iſrael *could not ſtedfaſtly behold* his Doctrine, any more than they could his Countenance. In a Word, they were ſaved, as well as we, by the Blood of *Chriſt*; but there was as great a Difference between their Knowledge of the Myſtery of our Redemption, by the Sacrifice of the Death

Death of *Chriſt*, and ours, as there was between that dark Cloud, wherewith God led the People at one Time, and that Pillar of Light wherewith he guided them at another.

And as the Goſpel gives us clearer Notions of the Expiation of Sin, ſo does it exhibit a fuller Aſſurance of our being juſtified, or having our Sins pardoned thereby. Religious Perſons, who lived before the Coming of *Chriſt*, knew that they were Sinners, and that they therefore had need of the Mercy and Favour of God, for the Remiſſion of thair Sins; but then, being not ſufficiently inſtructed in the Method of obtaining God's Favour, they could not but groan ſorely under the Weight of them. Severe Curſes were denounced in the Law againſt all, who ſhould in any Caſe tranſgreſs it; theſe Curſes were plain and eaſy to be underſtood; but the Promiſes of a Pardon, through the Merits of a Saviour, were more intricate and involved: When therefore the Danger, which threatened them, was ſo apparent, and the Methods of their Eſcape ſo obſcurely notified to them, it is no Wonder, if their Fears did very much over-balance their Hopes. Hence it is that the Spirit, by which they were governed, is in the Goſpel repreſented as a Spirit of Bondage, but the Spirit, by which we *Chriſtians* are influenced, is a Spirit of Adoption: *Ye have not now*, ſays the Apoſtle *Paul*, *received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry* Abba, Father, *i. e.* whereby we are as well aſſured of the Love of God, as a Child is of the Affection of an indulgent Father; as ſurely intitled to the Joys of Heaven, as an adopted Son is to the Inheritance

tance of him, who therefore adopted him, that he might make him his Heir; for (as the Apoſtle goes on to diſplay the Privileges of the Chriſtian) *the Spirit itſelf beareth Witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God, and if Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with* Chriſt.

5. And as the Aſſurances given us of this Inheritance, are greater; ſo, laſtly, is the Inheritance itſelf much more plainly revealed to us in the Goſpel, than ever it was before. Whatever could be learned of a future State, from the Light of Reaſon, that and much more was known to the *Jews:* What by Reaſon and Revelation was made known to the *Jews*, concerning an immortal Life, that and much more is manifeſted to us *Chriſtians.* The Texts, in which a future State is revealed to the *Jews*, are few, and here and there thinly ſcattered, in ſome particular Books of the *Old-Teſtament*; but there is no one Book, ſcarce one Chapter, in which this Doctrine is not taught in the *New.* Thoſe in the *Old-Teſtament*, are not ſo clear of Ambiguity, but that they are capable of another Interpretation, and even are actually interpreted of temporal Promiſes by ſome pious and learned *Chriſtians*; thoſe in the *New*, are ſo clear, that there is no room for the moſt Ignorant to miſapprehend, or the moſt Impious to pervert them. Some, in the *Old-Teſtament*, ſeem not more clearly to aſſert an immortal Life, than others do to deny it; and even the ſame Writers ſometimes deliver Things, upon this Head, which, at firſt View appear to be inconſiſtent; but as a future State of Happineſs and Miſery is ſupported by more Texts in the Goſpel, and

and thoſe much more clear than in the Law; ſo can it not be pretended, that it is in the leaſt impugned by any ſuſpicious Paſſage, thro' the whole *New Teſtament*: And therefore it is with great Juſtice, that the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* (who himſelf was excellently verſed in the Knowledge of the *Jewiſh* Law) hath obſerved, that *the Law had only a Shadow of good Things to come, but not the very Image of the Things, i. e.* it did but obſcurely and faintly typify the Glories of Heaven; not give us ſo bright an Image, and ſo lively a Repreſentation of the Rewards of another World, as is pictured out to us, and in all its full Proportion and Lineaments, accurately deſcribed in the Goſpel.

From all which it appears, how incomparably happy we *Chriſtians* are under the Goſpel, above what the *Jews* were in the Law; God having placed us under the beſt, the cleareſt Diſcoveries and Revelations, and given us the moſt noble, rational, and maſculine Religion, a Religion the moſt perfective of our Natures, and moſt conducive to our Happineſs. And what indeed can be a nobler Privilege, what a more generous and delightful Pleaſure, what a more powerful Incentive to Obedience, than for a rational Creature clearly to diſcern the Equity, the Neceſſity, the Benefit, the Decency, the Beauty of every Action he is called upon to do; and thence to be duly ſenſible how gracious a Maſter he ſerves; one that is ſo far from loading him with fruitleſs and arbitrary Impoſitions, that each Command, abſtracted from his Authority, who gives it, is able to recommend itſelf, and nothing required, but what every wiſe Man would chuſe of his own Accord,

and

and cannot, without being his own Enemy, ſo much as wiſh to be exempted from? *Bleſſed are the Eyes which ſee the Things that ye ſee* (ſays our Saviour to his Diſciples, and in them, to all Profeſſors of his Religion, in ſucceeding Generations) *for I tell you, that many Prophets and Kings, have deſired to ſee thoſe Things, which ye ſee, and have not ſeen them, and to hear thoſe Things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* But in vain were theſe great Privileges conferred on us, unleſs we make an anſwerable Improvement of them; and far from bleſſed ſhall we be, when we come to appear before the dreadful Tribunal, unleſs we endeavour *in all Things to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

The END *of the Life of* CHRIST.